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The Principles of  
ENGLISH METRE

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The Principles  
of  
ENGLISH METRE

BY

EGERTON SMITH, M.A.

Principal and Professor of English, Krishnagar College



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## PREFACE

BEFORE plunging into the detailed work for this book I thought that a formula might be stated which would cover the whole range of modern English verse ; but it was soon evident that no such simple formula was possible, that metrists have assumed a degree of homogeneity which is not actually found, that there was more complexity than their generalizations would lead one to expect, that there is an underlying law, but something at once less rigid and more comprehensive than any they had yet stated. Johnson's opinion that 'the essence of verse is regularity, and its ornament is variety' is often quoted with approval ; but how is this combination effected? Does it mean now one, now the other ; law and order prevailing in one part, Bolshevism asserting itself in another ; that is to say, the verse sometimes rhythmical, sometimes not ? This position I should be unwilling to accept, and I prefer to consider, with the poets themselves, that rhythm is an essential of poetry, and that the freedom is within the rhythmic law, not a violation of it.

The most suggestive theorists, I found, were Patmore, Lanier, and Mr. Omond—for the work of the latter, in particular, I have the greatest admiration—but above all I have valued the dicta of poets themselves, and have quoted them freely. Light may be thrown on the subject by music, phonetics, and experimental psychology ; but I have remembered that metrical law is not identical with,



or even merely part of, either phonetic or musical law. A separation from my books for three years of military service had the advantage of allowing my ideas to settle down, so that, I hope, no one theory or point of view predominated in my mind when I found it necessary to recast and rewrite entirely what I had written before 1916, and I found it easier to preserve an independent judgement in the work of reconstruction.

I had no wish to introduce controversy, but as there was so little unanimity even on fundamental points I had in Part I to argue many questions *ab initio*; and in a few cases criticism of well-known views seemed necessary. A critic once complained that Professor Saintsbury distinguished varieties of rhythmical effect 'by mere strings of metaphors, the refuge of the defeated analyst'. In the interests of clearness I have preferred to incur the imputation of a too pedestrian style, although I have tried to push back the analysis much farther than Professor Saintsbury thinks proper or safe, and am more likely to be defeated.

The distinction which I have adopted between different orders of rhythm—primary, secondary, and so on—is one of which I think use might well be made, especially in treating of such topics as blank verse in general and *vers libres* in particular. It is particularly necessary to define explicitly what is meant by 'rhythm', for the exact and the looser meanings of this word, upon which so much turns, are often not held apart by metrists.

Prosody has the reputation of being a profitless study, leading only to idle controversy. One reason for this is, as I have suggested, that theorists have tried to apply one rigid formula to different types of verse and to poetry at different periods of its development, without recognizing that differ-

ences of poetic aim involve differences of metrical form. Metrical theory cannot without danger divorce itself from the history of poetic form, and I have tried to show how the fundamental principles of verse have been modified by different factors, e.g. in Chapters IV, XII to XV, XVIII, and XIX. This has hardly received sufficient recognition, but for the full exposition of so complex a subject an historical as well as an analytical study is required.

For the sake of clearness I have allowed a certain amount of repetition to remain in dealing with the different topics of Part I ; but I am aware that, had space permitted, I might have done much more to exhibit the vital relation which, in the best work, exists between Metrical Form and Poetic Function.

The Glossarial Index contains all the technical terms that I have used, together with many that I have not used. Professor J. W. Holme, of Presidency College, Calcutta, has kindly read through my proofs ; and I have to thank the staff of the University Press for their great care and vigilance.

EGERTON SMITH.

KRISHNAGAR COLLEGE,

1922.



# ANALYTICAL TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PART I

### PRIMARY AND SECONDARY RHYTHM— LINE STRUCTURE

- I. THE RHYTHMIC ARTS . . . . . Page 3  
§ 1. Art—representative expression. § 2. Emotional colouring.  
§ 3. Imaginative treatment or idealization. § 4. Differences of  
medium or material. § 5. Reproduction of imaginative and  
emotional effect. § 6. Emotional and hedonic function of rhythm.
- II. PRIMARY RHYTHM IN POETRY . . . . . Page 5  
§ 1. Original connexion of dancing, song, and poetry. § 2. Wave-  
movement regular in time. § 3. Definition of rhythm. § 4. Feet—  
equivalent unitary components of verse. § 5. Organic constituents  
of verse. § 6. Subjective rhythm. § 7. Rhythmical effect depends  
on sounds in combination. § 8. Misunderstanding of the foot-  
system. § 9. Arsis and thesis. § 10. Properties of sound available  
for marking the ictus. § 11. Ictus variable save in relative position.  
§ 12. The point of division—rising and falling rhythm. § 13. Names  
of feet. *Addenda*. I. On arsis and thesis. II. On the actual  
location of the ictus.
- III. PROSE AND VERSE—SECONDARY RHYTHM Page 18  
§ 1. Loose and unsystematic rhythm of prose. § 2. Stability of  
primary rhythm in poetry. § 3. Secondary rhythm—lines or verses.  
§ 4. Metrical divisions organic, but distinct from sense-divisions.  
§ 5. Metres defined in terms of feet. § 6. The marking of secondary  
rhythm.
- IV. SUSPENSORY PAUSES—MEDIAL AND FINAL Page 23  
§ 1. Sense-pauses. § 2. Metrical pauses. § 3. Scope for variety.  
§ 4. Strong secondary rhythm—end-stopped verse. § 5. Weaker  
secondary rhythm—overflow. § 6. Structural importance of over-

flow. § 7. Varying position of sense-pauses. § 8. Caesura, or internal metrical pause. § 9. Preference for medial position. § 10. Rationale of the caesura. § 11. Degrees of pause. § 12. Best position for medial pauses. § 13. Masculine and feminine caesura—epic caesura or dramatic caesura. § 14. Elocutionary treatment of pauses.

## V. METRICAL EQUIVALENCE—TRISYLLABIC

SUBSTITUTION . . . . . Page 34

§ 1. Variation from the normal syllabic scheme. § 2. Substitution of equivalent trisyllabic feet. § 3. Theory of elision or slurring. § 4. Frequently not applicable. § 5. Unnecessary save in special cases. § 6. Milton's elisions not actual but theoretic. § 7. Poe's explanation. § 8. Elision in Chaucer. § 9. Quadrisyllabic substitution.

## VI. MONOSYLLABIC SUBSTITUTION—COM-

PENSATORY PAUSE . . . . . Page 42

§ 1. Monosyllabic feet. § 2. Substitution of silent intervals preserving equality of duration. § 3. Necessity of pause between full stresses. § 4. Convertibility of silence and sound—compensatory pause. § 5. Sense-pauses available for purposes of equivalence. § 6. Analogy with musical 'rests'. § 7. Compensatory lengthening. § 8. Absence of fixed conventional quantities. § 9. Suppression of arsis; § 10. & of whole feet. § 11. Special cases. § 12. Suppression of thesis in trisyllabic rhythms. *Addendum.* Compensatory pauses.

## VII. COMBINED SUBSTITUTION AND THE CONDITIONS OF EQUIVALENCE . . . . .

Page 55

§ 1. Combination of monosyllabic and trisyllabic substitution. § 2. The orthodox explanation—trochaic substitution. § 3. Congruity of feet. § 4. The object of scansion. § 5. Rhetoric as a guide to scansion. § 6. Examples discussed. § 7. Natural conditions of equivalence. § 8. Spondees and pyrrhics. § 9. Alleged dactylic substitution. *Addenda.* I. Inversion. II. Syncopation.

## VIII. CONSTITUTION OF THE ICTUS—WEIGHT AND ACCENT . . . . .

Page 65

§ 1. Function of the ictus to mark periodicity. ✓ § 2. Ictus materialized by means of weight or emphasis. § 3. Constitution of accent: (a) physical, (b) physiological, (c) psychological.

§ 4. Degrees of stress or weight. § 5. Stresses classified according to function:—(i) Word-accent, ( $\alpha$ ) Native words, ( $\beta$ ) Romance words; (ii) Sentence-stress, ( $\alpha$ ) Syntactical accent, ( $\beta$ ) Rhetorical accent; (iii) Metrical stress. § 6. Mental beat not always represented externally by full accent. § 7. Mental beat the essential, and often sufficient in itself. § 8. Usually materialized, but arsis requires only relative degree of weight. § 9. Availability of secondary accents for ictus carried to extremes. § 10. Assumption of pitch-accent. § 11. Light and heavy feet. § 12. Hovering or level stress. § 13. Alternative explanation recognizing relative nature of metrical stress. § 14. Wrenched accent. § 15. Recession of accent in Milton; § 16. & in Shakespeare. § 17. Wrenching in ballads. § 18. Summary: Conflict of accent—counterpoint of rhythms.

IX. QUANTITY . . . . . Page 84

§ 1. Alleged structural unimportance of quantity in English verse. § 2. Quantity in classical verse. § 3. Meanings of quantity. § 4. Absence in English of conventionally fixed quantities with simple ratios. § 5. Presence of natural quantities with various lengths. § 6. Function of quantity in English verse: ( $\alpha$ ) the duration of feet; § 7. ( $\beta$ ) its connexion with the ictus. § 8. General, though not essential, concomitance. *Addenda.* I. Relations between stress and quantity. ( $\alpha$ ) Experimental evidence. ( $\beta$ ) The classicist view. II. Poe on quantity.

X. HYPERCATALECTIC VERSE . . . . . Page 95

§ 1. Feminine endings. § 2. Anacrusis. § 3. Filling up of pauses produces continuity of movement. § 4. Hypermetrical syllables at the internal break.

XI. VARIETY IN VERSE . . . . . Page 99

§ 1. Summary. Periodicity marked by weight. § 2. Scope for variety without violation of regularity. § 3. Relation of concrete rhythms to the normal metrical type. § 4. Value of metrical variety which preserves equivalence. § 5. Uniformity amidst diversity. § 6. The theoretic normal—diaeretic verse. § 7. Variations in heroic verse—( $\alpha$ ) syllabic variation, (i) omission ( $\alpha$ ) of thesis; ( $\beta$ ) or of arsis, ( $\gamma$ ) or of both; (ii) addition; (iii) combined addition and omission; ( $\beta$ ) hypercatalexis, (i) final, (ii) medial, (iii) extra foot; ( $c$ ) weight; ( $d$ ) speed; ( $e$ ) smoothness; ( $f$ ) pause, (i) final, (ii) medial; ( $g$ ) relation between metrical

units and speech-units. § 8. Adjustment of natural speech-rhythms to metrical scheme. § 9. Verse governed by metrical law as distinct from phonetic musical law.

## XII. THE SYLLABIC THEORY OF VERSE . Page 111

§ 1. Numerical equality in verses. § 2. Syllabic regularity and alternating verse. § 3. Numbers. § 4. Elizabethan revolt against syllabic restrictions. § 5. Eighteenth-century reaction to syllabic rule and alternating stress. § 6. Milton's fictitious syllabism. § 7. Application of syllabism in scansion. § 8. Its connexion with the 'pitch-accent' theory; § 9. & with hovering stress. § 10. Dependence on the elision theory. § 11. Value of syllabism.

## XIII. SONG-VERSE AND SPEECH-VERSE . Page 118

§ 1. Varying degrees of rhythmical precision in verse. § 2. Two kinds of verse—approximating to music or to prose speech; § 3. // & dominated by the sound-scheme or the thought-scheme. § 4. Absolute dominance of rhythm in music and song. § 5. Compromise in lyric poetry. § 6. Lyric verse set to musical accompaniment. § 7. Illustrations of song verse. § 8. Change of time-signature in song, and approximate periodicity in speech-verse. § 9. True song-verse in Moore. § 10. Requirements of vocalization. § 11. Melodic requirements of the poetic lyric. § 12. Self-contained music of Shelley's lyric verse. § 13. Speech-verse. § 14. Correspondence of form and content. *Addendum*. On pitch-relations in song and lyric verse.

## XIV. THE METRES OF ENGLISH VERSE . Page 131

§ 1. Iambic basis of speech-verse. § 2. Due to cadences latent in words and phrases. § 3. But falling rhythm sometimes suggested. § 4. Five-foot line the staple. § 5. Its scope for variety. § 6. Influence of syllabism. § 7. The four-foot line in rapid and lyrical verse. § 8. Scott's defence of it. § 9. The alexandrine—tendency to bipartition. § 10. Longer lines. § 11. Shorter iambic lines in lyric. § 12. Anapaestic verse—its speed; § 13. & consequent disabilities for speech-verse. § 14. The characteristic four-foot line. § 15. Narrow range of substitution. § 16. Trochaic measures—individuality of the tripping movement. § 17. The characteristic four-foot line. § 18. Longer and shorter measures. § 19. Types of variation. § 20. Difficulties of dactylic measures. § 21. Paemonic

metres—major and minor rhythms. § 22. Rising and falling rhythms combined. § 23. Indeterminate rhythms. § 24. Special function of trissyllabic rhythms.

XV. IMITATION OF CLASSICAL METRES . . . . . Page 150

A. THE HEXAMETER . . . . . Page 150

§ 1. The Tudor pseudo-classical revival. § 2. Confusion between accent and quantity. § 3. Necessity for conventional rules of quantitative pronunciation. § 4. But the resultant verse not a natural rhythm to the English ear. § 5. Preponderance of consonants in English. § 6. Determination of length by position in Latin. § 7. Assumes a combination and continuity of sound not habitual in English. § 8. Naturalized hexameters only possible in analogical form. § 9. Deficiency in spondaic effect. § 10. Clough's purely accentual hexameters. § 11. Reproduction of classical hexameter effect by Calverley—concurrence of accent and *natural* quantity. § 12. Summary.

B. THE LYRIC METRES . . . . . Page 157

§ 13. Musical structure of Greek lyric metres. § 14. Sapphics. § 15. Hendecasyllabics. § 16. Alcaics. § 17. Other metres. § 18. Elegiacs. *Addendum.* The so-called 'combative accent' in pseudo-classical verse.

## PART II

### SECONDARY AND TERTIARY RHYTHM— RIME AND STANZA

XVI. RIME . . . . . Page 169

§ 1. Functions of rime, (i) Structural, (a) to signalize ends of lines (secondary rhythm), (β) to mark grouping of lines into stanzas (tertiary rhythm); (ii) Melodic; (iii) Rhetorical—to reinforce natural emphasis. § 2. Alliteration—its kinds. § 3. Its functions in Modern and Old English. § 4. Internal alliteration. § 5. Assonance. § 6. Full rime—definition. § 7. Classification of imperfect rimes. § 8. Classification of full rimes. § 9. Extended rime. § 10. A proposed nomenclature. § 11. Broken rime. § 12. Arrangements of rime-sounds. § 13. Internal rime—its arrangements. § 14. Initial repetition. § 15. Refrain.



- XVII. THE STANZA . . . . . Page 194  
     § 1. Stanza defined. § 2. The couplet. § 3. Value of stanzaic structure. § 4. Length of stanza. § 5. Scope for harmonic combination. § 6. Rimeless stanzas. § 7. Stanzaic *enjambement*. § 8. Conventional stanza divisions.
- XVIII. VERS LIBRES . . . . . Page 203  
     § 1. Indeterminate secondary rhythm; § 2. & tertiary rhythm. § 3. Irregular lines and paragraphs in *Lycidas*. § 4. Importance of a base-metre. § 5. Value of rime. § 6. Obedience to an internal law. § 7. Suitability for wilder romantic themes. § 8. Principle of recurrence essential in some form. § 9. The phrase as metrical unit. § 10. Illustrations. *Addendum*. The origins of *Vers Libres*.
- XIX. BLANK VERSE PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE     Page 213  
     § 1. Plasticity of blank verse—form without uniformity. § 2. Tertiary rhythm indeterminate. § 3. Necessity for elastic and comprehensive structural units. § 4. Adaptability of blank verse. § 5. Capacities for organization in musical paragraphs. § 6. Dangers of its freedom. § 7. Its harmonic possibilities. § 8. Organic periodic structure of Milton's verse. § 9. Organic amplification in Shakespeare's paragraphs. § 10. Cumulative principle in Shelley. § 11. His free overflow. § 12. Marlowe's paragraphs—emotional unity. § 13. Shakespeare's versatile command of varied effects. § 14. Disastrous neglect of secondary rhythm in later drama. § 15. The principle of loose extension in Tennyson.
- XX. THE SHORTER STANZAIC FORMS . . . . . Page 227  
     § 1. Couplets: (a) four-foot, (b) five-foot, (c) longer metres. § 2. Tercets—terza rima. § 3. Quatrains: (a) with couplet rime; (b) with alternate rime, (i) isometrical, (ii) anisometrical; (c) with intermittent rime—Ballad measure; (d) with enclosing rime—*In Memoriam* stanza; (e) asymmetrical schemes; (f) monorimed quatrains. § 4. Five-line stanzas. § 5. Six-line stanzas.
- XXI. THE LONGER STANZAS . . . . . Page 243  
     § 1. Seven-line stanzas: (a) Chaucerian rime-royal, (b) other schemes. § 2. Eight-line stanzas: (a) Ottava rima, (b) other eight-line schemes, (i) narrative, (ii) lyrical. § 3. Nine-line stanzas: (a) Spenserian stanza, (b) other schemes. § 4. Ten-line stanzas. § 5. Eleven-line stanzas. § 6. Twelve-line stanzas.

## XXII. WHOLE POEMS OF FIXED STRUCTURE

## —A. THE SONNET . . . . . Page 262

- § 1. Poems of fixed structure. § 2. The sonnet. § 3. The Italian sonnet—its thought-structure. § 4. Correspondence with verse-structure. § 5. Its bipartition. § 6. The quatrain and tercet divisions. § 7. Its rime-scheme. § 8. Avoidance of final couplet. § 9. Modifications of the Italian sonnet—(a) Milton, (β) Sidney and Wordsworth. § 10. The Shakespearian sonnet. § 11. Its frequent bipartition. § 12. The Spenserian sonnet. *Addendum*. The length of the sonnet.

## XXIII. WHOLE POEMS OF FIXED STRUCTURE

## —B. THE ODE . . . . . Page 276

- § 1. Ode defined. § 2. Lesbian or Horatian Ode. § 3. Longer stanzas of fixed structure. § 4. True Pindaric Ode—its parts. § 5. Its detailed structure—symmetrical arrangement of unequal members. § 6. Congreve's exposition of its true principles. § 7. Modifications of the Pindaric scheme. § 8. Irregular or pseudo-Pindaric odes.

## XXIV. WHOLE POEMS OF FIXED STRUCTURE

## —C. CONVENTIONAL ROMANCE FORMS Page 284

- § 1. Romance lyric schemes based on the refrain. § 2. Villanelle. § 3. Sestina. § 4. Ballade. § 5. Rondel. § 6. Rondeau. § 7. Roundel. § 8. Triolet. § 9. Summary. *Addendum*. The Pantoum.

## CONCLUSION . . . . . Page 294

## APPENDICES

- I. Representation of Rhythm; (A) Scansional,  
(B) Graphical . . . . . Page 297

- II. Additional Notes . . . . . Page 301

## GLOSSARIAL INDEX OF TERMS. . . . . Page 303

## INDEX OF NAMES . . . . . Page 325



## PART I

### PRIMARY AND SECONDARY RHYTHM— LINE STRUCTURE



# I

## THE RHYTHMIC ARTS

§ 1. In the nature of man there is a powerful instinct of expression; he expresses himself in actions, in words, in work, and in play. In so far as he is rational he expresses himself in his arguments, in so far as he is religious he expresses himself in worship. Man as an artist has his proper means of expression; according to Aristotle this was imitation of nature—nature in its widest sense, including human as well as external nature.

§ 2. Men have different temperaments and varying moods. Therefore the emotional effects of the same event may be different for different men, or for the same man at different times; and a man's vision of the world and of life is coloured by his temperament and his moods. Some emotion will be aroused in the artist when he sees under a certain aspect the events or situations of a man's life, or the scenes of external nature. He expresses his vision, real or imaginative, in such a form as will give enduring and universal life to what was merely transitory and particular; and since he is a social being, he does this in forms that are intelligible and pleasurable to others, and in a way likely to arouse in them emotions akin to his own.

§ 3. The artist's function then is not merely to copy what he sees or hears, but to treat it imaginatively, so that his rendering may give pleasure because it is beautiful, and may convey to others the significance which his vision conveyed to him. He selects and modifies, and thus gives an idealized representation of what he has experienced. In this sense he is a creative artist, as distinguished from a scientist.

§ 4. The question so far has been of art in general. The distinction between the different arts is based on the medium or material in which the artist works; the sculptor works in solid material, the painter in line and colour, the musician in pure sound,

the poet or literary artist in speech-sounds, i.e. in the sounds which men use to convey intelligible meaning, the dancer in movements of the body.

In their ultimate aim the fine arts are alike, but they differ in the specific processes of imaginative representation and in their immediate effects.

§ 5. With sculpture or painting it is easy to see how the imitation can be accomplished; and even with the literary art, which uses words as definite symbols, it is intelligible. But how can an event be represented by pure sound? The scope for direct imitation might seem to be restricted to mere imitation of sounds that may occur. 'Give the most masterly symphonist a great storm to represent. Nothing is easier than to represent the whistling of the winds and the roar of the thunder. But by what harmonic combinations can he make visible to the eye the lightning flashes that suddenly tear asunder the veil of the night, and the still more terrifying part of the storm, the movement of masses of water now lifting themselves up like mountains, now falling and seeming to plunge into bottomless abysses? If the hearer has not been informed of the subject he will never guess it, and I defy him to distinguish a storm from a battle. Despite science and genius, forms cannot be portrayed by sounds. Music, if it is well advised, will refrain from struggling against the impossible, it will not undertake to represent the rise and fall of the waves and other similar phenomena. It will do better: with sounds it will arouse in our soul the feelings which pass through us in turn during the different scenes of the tempest. It is thus that Haydn will rival and even outdo the painter, because it has been granted to music to move and stir the soul even more deeply than painting' (*Cousin, Du Vrai, du Beau, et du Bien*, 26th ed., pp. 155-6). Similarly the best poetry, Burke declared, 'does not in general produce its end by raising the images of things, but by exciting a passion similar to that which real objects will excite by other means'.

The imitation that is the basis of art is therefore not a mere copying of things and events; but the artist with the means and processes at his disposal reproduces the *effects* of nature with all their deep and manifold impressiveness, and often something else in addition.

§ 6. The special gift of Music is to arouse emotions similar to those under the influence of which it was composed. One function

of poetry, too, is to act on the emotions and reproduce the impassioned feelings in connexion with which it originated. 'The end of Poetry', said Wordsworth, 'is to produce excitement in coexistence with an overbalance of pleasure.' This may come about in part through the ideas suggested by skilfully chosen words; but poetry and music have this in common, that the medium in which they work is a rhythmical succession of sounds.<sup>1</sup> There is a strong presumption therefore that the poetical, like the musical, arrangements of sounds, should not only give peculiar pleasure, but also have the power of arousing emotions directly.<sup>2</sup> This power is largely to be accounted for by the presence of rhythm, for this is the feature that is common to the sound-arrangement of both arts.

Rhythmical expression is a natural outcome of poetic emotion, and it helps in its turn to convey that emotion to others. It fires the imagination of the hearer and induces that impassioned apprehension of the subject-matter which is the very life of poetry. Rhythm is not something merely superadded for the purpose of giving pleasure, although this in itself is an important function;<sup>3</sup> but something which is of the very essence of poetic expression; 'it is', said Hegel, 'even more necessary than a figurative and picturesque diction'.

## II

### PRIMARY RHYTHM IN POETRY

§ 1. It was pointed out by Adam Smith that the three arts of dancing, poetry, and song spring from a common origin and were

<sup>1</sup> This is true equally when poetry is merely read silently or is being composed; for words may appear to the imagination as sounds as well as symbols of things or ideas. It does not matter for purposes of exposition and argument whether the rhythm is (a) actually perceived by a hearer or externalized in sound by a composer, or (b) is merely conceptual. The mutual relations between the perceived sounds correspond to those between the conceived sounds.

<sup>2</sup> This is probably what Aristotle meant by 'containing in themselves imitations of moods'.

<sup>3</sup> The poet, said Sidney, 'Commeth to you with words set in delightful proportion'. Coleridge went so far as to say that 'as a particular pleasure is found in anticipating the recurrence of sounds and qualities, all compositions that have this charm superadded . . . may be entitled poems' (*Biog. Lit.*, ch. xiv).



once inseparable. A typical combination of the three is found in the *Carole* of the Middle Ages. Homer tells how Hephaistos represented on the great shield of Achilles a boy who 'made pleasant music on a clear-toned viol and sang thereto a sweet Linos-song, while the rest with feet falling together kept time with the music and song' (*Iliad* xviii. 569-72). So, too, in the *Odyssey* (viii. 260 et seq.) Demodocus, accompanied by dancing, played on the lyre and 'sang' the story of Ares and Aphrodite. Ethnological evidence from less advanced stages of civilization has given further support to Adam Smith's observation; for in all ages and lands the primitive tribe on festal occasions, or before battle, sang and played rough music to the time of a simple dance. All this goes to show that strict and exact rhythm was not inherent in ordinary speech, but imposed upon it by bodily movements that were regular to the point of monotony.<sup>1</sup>

Not only in dance but in work is regular movement of importance and accompanied by rhythmical song: examples such as sailors' chancies and the singing of coolies working together will be familiar to all. The reason for this tendency is an instinctive economy of energy. The rhythmic instinct is so strong that even deliberate attempts at irregular action show a persistent tendency to revert to action that is regular both in time and in the range within which its intensity varies. Experiments show that persons who have been instructed to make certain movements at intentionally irregular intervals felt great difficulty in doing so. They involuntarily tended to repeat equal or nearly equal periods in succession.

§ 2. The natural conclusion then is that, like the regularity of dance-movement, the regular movement of early song was a regular movement in time. The rhythm of modern English poetry too, which is descended from ancient song, appears commonly in the recurrence

Wordsworth in his famous *Preface* has noted the regulative effect of rhythm upon emotional excitement, as well as its value in supplementing the otherwise inadequate kindling power of the poet's words; an important subject which deserves fuller discussion. Coleridge even traces the origin of metre to the mental balance brought about by the spontaneous effort to restrain the workings of passion.

<sup>1</sup> In India this monotony is still a feature both of the village dancing of hill-tribes, and the professional dancing in the plains. It is true that certain *saws* and *maxims* prevalent in common speech from the earliest times are rhythmical in form; but this is largely a case of those surviving which had the good fortune to be cast into rhythmical form, which was adapted to make them stick in the memory of the people. The others did not survive.

at regular time-intervals of beats or pulses in its flow. If we read a passage of undoubted poetry, we shall recognize that certain words, and certain syllables of those words that have more than one, stand out more prominently and receive greater attention than others. Furthermore, when the passage is recited, those sounds which are thus brought out into relief seem to fall on the ear at regular intervals of time. This regular wave-like rise and fall in the flow of sense and sound constitutes the primary rhythm of poetry; and it is these arrangements of sounds that form the subject-matter of prosody.

Dárkened só, yet shóne  
 Abóve them áll the Archánel : bùt his fáce  
 Deep scárs of thúnder hád intrénched, and cáre  
 Sát on his fáded chéek, but únder bróws  
 Of dáuntless cóurage, ánd consíderate prídé  
 Wáiting revénge.

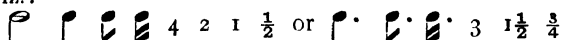
§ 3. We have seen from the general nature of rhythm that regularity in time is essential, but it is not sufficient to define rhythm merely as a succession of equal periods of time. The passage of minutes gives such a series, but minutes are mere conceptual periods. Without a regular sequence of impressions there can be no concrete rhythm. There must be something perceptible at the beginning or end of every period to mark the point of division. This succession of events with equal intervals of time gives a possibility of rhythm, but whether this potential or latent rhythm can become actual to a perceiving subject depends on the stimuli which are received by the nervous system and the way they are dealt with. If at the end of every second a click exactly uniform in every respect is made on a sounding instrument we should have a perceptible equal division of time, but should we have rhythm? If every second sound, or every third or fourth, is made more prominent in some way, louder, longer, or of different tone, we undoubtedly have rhythm. The difference between the impressions effects a grouping, so that we have not merely a division of time, but also a division of a time-occupying sequence of sounds (with the intervening periods of silence) into periodic groups or sections equal in respect of their time duration. The same is true if instead of a discrete series of sounds we have a continuous stream of sounds. It is not sufficient merely to cut up silence into equal lengths.<sup>1</sup> Concrete auditory rhythm then involves the presence of

<sup>1</sup> This is the weakness of M. Paul Verrier's definition: 'Rhythm is constituted by a perceptible division of time or of space into equal intervals, or by

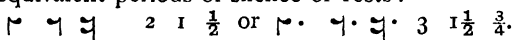
perceptible temporal regularity in a flow of more or less continuous sound. From the point of view of the hearer it depends on regularly recurrent differences—of degrees of impressiveness—in a stream of sense-impressions of a given kind.

Confining ourselves to sound-rhythm, we may say that it is constituted by a sequence of sounds—either a continuous or a discrete series—which perceptibly falls into periodic sections equal in duration; the beginning or the end of the sections being marked by the regular recurrence of some sound with recognizable characteristics which immediately stands out and strikes the senses as in some respect stronger or more impressive than the intervening sounds.

§ 4. Both in music and in poetry, ancient classical and modern English, this temporal regularity of movement occurs, and the regularity is marked by certain recognizable characteristics. It is therefore natural and convenient to make the periodic recurrence of this beat or pulse in a rhythmic flow of sound the basis of a division into equivalent units for purposes of analysis. In music these unitary sections of equal duration are called bars, and the beginning of each bar is marked for the ear by accent. The constituent notes of a bar have simple ratios of duration with each other, viz.:

 4 2 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\cdot$   $\cdot$   $\cdot$  3  $1\frac{1}{2}$   $\frac{3}{4}$

as have the equivalent periods of silence or rests:

 2 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\cdot$   $\cdot$   $\cdot$  3  $1\frac{1}{2}$   $\frac{3}{4}$ .

So that in the same series each bar contains sounds or pauses with a total duration of a certain number of time-units. Classical Greek metres were composed on a similar system, although in poetry that was not intended to be sung only the simplest of these ratios existed between the syllables of a measure. In verse the sections are called feet or measures, and the beginning or end of a foot is marked by an ictus or beat. In English verse the constituent syllables of a foot have not necessarily the same mutual time-ratios as in Greek, but the time occupied by the syllables (and any intervening pauses) *in combination* is nevertheless usually regular,

the return at sensibly equal intervals of a determinate phenomenon' (*Les Principes de la Métrique anglaise*, 2<sup>e</sup> partie, § 2). Elsewhere he says explicitly: 'Ce n'est pas là une division de la matière linguistique, mais une division du temps, une simple durée dont le commencement et la fin sont signalés par un phénomène linguistique, c'est-à-dire par un sensible accroissement d'intensité' (*op. cit.* i, p. 146). If the division is only of time what is it that is intensified? It is that which occupies time that is divided.

and the ictus falls at constant intervals. In neither music nor verse are these periods necessarily filled completely by sounds, or by a fixed number of sounds. The section may include an interval of silence, but this pause or rest does not interfere with the periodic spacing of the sound; the duration of the section and incidence of the beat has the same temporal regularity.

§ 5. If English verse is primarily rhythmical it must be divisible into equal measures or feet. The fact that the durations may be slightly modified in actual articulation, according to individual estimates of rhetorical or emotional values, does not vitiate the basic truth.<sup>1</sup> It has, however, sometimes been asked whether these feet are real constituents of rhythm or merely arbitrary divisions. But it has been seen that rhythm rests not merely on a division of time, a mere phantom concept, but on an arrangement of speech-sound which occupies time.<sup>1</sup> The regularity of poetical rhythm is a temporal regularity, but the foot is not merely an 'isochronous interval'; it consists of the concrete filling in of that interval by sounds with or without pauses.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, experiments in the psychological laboratory have shown an instinctive tendency to make a longer interval between groups of discrete sounds than between the individual sounds of the group, i.e. to distinguish the group as a unit rather than the individual constituents of the group. In concrete rhythm, therefore, the feet are not merely latent; they are organic elements of it, and the division is naturally deducible from the rhythm.<sup>1</sup> Yet, although they are recognizable units, they are not independent entities; they cannot exist apart from each other, but have their life only as part of a whole.

§ 6. Hitherto we have been considering objective rhythm—the periodic arrangement is marked by a perceptible beat. When, however, a regularly periodic series of unvarying sounds presents itself which is not perceptibly marked off into groups or sections, there is always a tendency for subjective rhythm to arise. The instinct of rhythm is so firmly rooted in human nature that it will

<sup>1</sup> The presence and recognition of feet does not necessarily involve actual cutting of the sequence of rhythmical utterance. The continuity of a bicycle chain is not destroyed by the fact that it contains a number of constituent links. We can dissect for purposes of analysis; but the chain in its working state is continuous, and so is a word of two or more syllables. If we regard rhythmical speech as a succession of syllables the series is sometimes continuous and sometimes discrete.

lead to the involuntary formation of rhythmical groups even where originally there were none; i.e. where the stimuli did not vary objectively. We naturally tend to think of the ringing of a single church-bell not as a plain series *ding-ding-ding* but as *ding-dong, ding-dong*. The *tick-tack* of a clock with a pendulum may represent an objective difference of sound, but experiments with a series of sounds unvarying in duration, loudness, pitch, or tone have been made (by Mr. T. L. Bolton, see *Amer. Journ. of Psychol.*, Jan. 1894), and the resulting mental impressions were that—

- (1) the series tended to break up into groups;
- (2) the number of sounds in the group increased *pari passu* with an increase in speed, and vice versa, the numbers varying from two to four;
- (3) the division into groups was made by giving an imaginary stress at regular intervals;
- (4) this was accompanied by involuntary muscular movements, of hand, or head, or foot, as in beating time.

This introduction of subjective rhythm may always occur with a series of impressions of the same species capable of arrangement in periods equal in duration, though not necessarily equal in the number of impressions. If this is so, it follows *a fortiori* that if an objective rhythm is already established, a missing beat may be supplied subjectively in its right place. If we attend to the strokes of a clock striking twelve and have counted six, but just when the seventh stroke should be heard the mid-day gun is fired so that the stroke is not actually heard, we supply it in imagination and say 'seven' at the right moment, and when the next is heard count it 'eight'. Similarly in such a line as:

The sound of mány shócks abóut the hóuse, the túmbling óf the wáter  
ón the rók.

when a clear rhythm has already been set up we have no difficulty in treating *of* and *on* as if they carried the beat. Children, who naturally read for the rhythm rather than for the sense, tend to externalize this beat more than is necessary. Ruskin tells a well-known story of how he insisted, 'partly in true instinct for rhythm (being wholly careless on the subject of urns and their contents)', on reciting the lines

Shall any following spring revive  
The ashes of the urn?

with an accented *of*. In these cases the extreme lightness of the

adjacent syllables does help to give a certain prominence to *of* and *on*, weak though they are; but the beat may also have to be provided mentally—in rare cases—even when there is no sound at all with which it may coincide.

§ 7. Similarly it is not the number of sounds which matters, but their combined extension in time and the way in which they are spaced out by co-ordinating pauses and sounds. The syllables in a foot may vary from one to three or even four, according as the utterance is slow or rapid.



It is always the combination as a whole that we have to regard, not the individual syllables; the spacing and distribution of syllables and accents rather than their actual number and strength.

§ 8. Objection has sometimes been made to analysis of verse into feet. In some cases this is due to the evident inadequacy of metrical systems based on a misunderstanding of classical verse. In others it arises from failure to perceive that the basis of English verse is the perceptible marking off of equivalent rhythmical units by a regularly recurrent beat or ictus; and this may be due to inability or unwillingness to recognize

- ‘ (a) the part played by pauses,
- (b) that the constituent syllables of feet need not have simple quantitative ratios amongst themselves,
- (c) that a uniform number of syllables is not essential,
- (d) that the ictus may be externalized in varying degrees of strength or hardly at all.

These points will be taken up in following chapters; meanwhile we may assume that if English verse is rhythmical it must be divisible into what can be recognized easily as—at least approximately—equivalent measures or feet.

§ 9. Clearly every foot may be divided, for convenience in analysis, into two parts—the part upon which the ictus falls, and the remainder, called respectively *arsis* and *thesis*. In the thesis the number of syllables may vary from one to two or even

three, or it may consist only of a silent interval. We have still to consider in what other respect the arsis differs from the thesis, or, in other words, how the ictus is constituted.

§ 10. Sounds may differ one from another in respect of

- (1) the length of time which they occupy, i.e. duration or quantity;
- (2) the force or intensity with which they are produced, i.e. stress or stress-accent;
- (3) shrillness of tone, i.e. pitch or tonic-accent;
- (4) the quality of sound used, depending on the vocal organs called into play, i.e. tone-colour.

Both (2) and (3) are often called 'accent', and the two senses are frequently confused.

Tone-colour may be put aside at once, for it is clear that the ictus does not depend on the recurrence of the same vowel or consonant sound or any one combination of them.<sup>1</sup>

It is conceivable that every arsis might be marked by a higher tone than its thesis, and the word arsis is capable of meaning the raising of the voice to a higher pitch. This, however, is not supported by common experience, and experiments seem to indicate that differences of pitch alone do not give a sense of rhythm.

Stress played a prominent part in marking the beat of all Old Germanic verse and of very early and mediaeval Latin, and according to common experience in Modern English. Changes of intensity alone are certainly sufficient to give a sense of rhythm.

Quantity has been of first importance in the verse systems of many languages. Since rhythm depends on periodicity the lengths of syllables must play a leading part, but our special problem is concerned with the ictus. Is the arsis always a long syllable? If so, is it enough for the arsis to be long, without being marked in any other way? In classical epic poetry the arsis was always long; whether it was also stressed has been a matter of dispute. In Old English the stress fell usually on a long syllable, although frequently two short syllables seem to have been regarded as a 'resolved'

<sup>1</sup> In O.E. alliteration was so used—always two and usually three of every four successive arses began with the same consonant or any vowel sound—but alliteration has in Modern English lost its organic structural function, although it is still usually confined to stressed syllables.

long. Experiments indicate, though not without uncertainty, that quantity alone is capable of producing rhythm.<sup>1</sup>

Fuller discussion of this thorny question must be deferred until other points have been established. All that is done here is to indicate the problem, which has not always been squarely faced.

Meanwhile it will be sufficient to say that the arsis is characterized by *weight*, without pushing the analysis further for the present; or the term *metrical stress* may be used as equivalent to *ictus* (a Latin word disliked by many), or *beat* (which has some ambiguity owing to its use in musical theory as meaning a unit of time, e.g. '3 beats to a bar'), or *accent* (the musical term equivalent to *ictus*).

§ II. It is necessary to bear in mind:

(1) the possibility that the ictus may be compound, i.e. that weight may be composed of speech-accent with either quantity or pitch or both; and that its constituents may vary in their mutual proportions at different times, e.g. stress may be combined with length and low pitch or with shortness and high pitch;

(2) the probability that it is not absolute but relative degree of weight that is required; i.e. it is sufficient for the arsis, though not markedly heavy, to be heavier than the syllables immediately before and after;

(3) the certainty that in a given piece of homogeneous verse the ictus must fall always at the end or always at the beginning of a foot. A division like  $\text{—} \times | \times \text{—} | \times \text{—} | \times \times | \text{—} \text{—}$  is meaningless for metrical analysis. If the line is rhythmical the ictus falls at regular intervals and the arrangement will be

$$\begin{array}{c} \wedge \text{—} | \times \times \text{—} | \times \text{—} | \times \times \text{—} | \wedge \text{—} \\ \text{or } \text{—} \times \times | \text{—} \times | \text{—} \times \times | \text{—} \wedge | \text{—} \wedge \end{array}$$

This notation represents not absolute but only relative syllabic values; the use of musical notation brings out the point still more clearly. Compare  $\begin{array}{c} \wedge \\ | \text{P} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \wedge \\ | \text{P} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \wedge \\ | \text{P} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \wedge \\ | \text{P} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \wedge \\ | \text{P} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \wedge \\ | \text{P} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \wedge \\ | \text{P} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \wedge \\ | \text{P} \end{array}$  with  $\begin{array}{c} \text{P} \\ | \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \text{P} \\ | \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \text{P} \\ | \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \text{P} \\ | \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \text{P} \\ | \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \text{P} \\ | \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \text{P} \\ | \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \text{P} \\ | \end{array}$  where the accent falls on the first sound of each bar.

<sup>1</sup> But in Greek lyric poetry feet with three short syllables occur, as in the so-called paeonic arrangement, which is strictly  $\text{P} \text{P} \text{P} | \text{P} \cdot | \text{P} \text{P} \text{P} | \text{P} \cdot |$  and not  $\text{—} \text{—} \text{—} | \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} |$ .

When a spondee occurs in the hexameter is there no distinction save of quality between the two equal long syllables?





the opening light syllable being a mere anacrusis, outside the metrical scheme.

Professor Saintsbury (*Hist. Eng. Pros.* iii. 525) denounces this as 'ludicrous, hideous, and false'. The system arises most frequently, though not always, from a belief that

(a) metrical law is merely a special branch of musical law;

(b) iambic and anapaestic rhythms are the same respectively as trochaic and dactylic.

However much metric may learn from music the first belief is untrue. The poet works in a different material. He has to use words which have an existence independent of him. Even as mere sound-complexes, they have an individuality of their own which cannot be entirely disregarded by the poet. It is not surprising, therefore, that differences in cadence should be brought about by characteristic arrangements of words.

With regard to the second belief, Swinburne, the fineness of whose ear few will impugn, declares that all dactylic forms of verse are 'unnatural and abhorrent' in English, yet since he thinks that anapaestics are 'natural and pliable', and has himself written many fine specimens of them, he clearly feels some difference. Confirmation of this is given by psychological experiment. 'The subject tapped with his finger on a noiseless key according to the following schemes:

(a) 1'-2, 1'-2, 1'-2 . . . . .

(b) 1-2', 1-2', 1-2' . . . . .

where the beat to be emphasized is marked with the sign '. In the scheme 1'-2, for instance, the subject was asked to emphasize every first tap of the rhythmic group, but he had, at the same time, to try and keep always a uniform interval between two successive taps, not only between 1' and 2, but also between 2 and 1', although he was to think of the groups in pairs 1'-2, not 2-1'. The results showed that the interval which comes after the emphasized beat is comparatively longer in 1-2' than in 1'-2' (*Scripture, Experimental Phonetics*, p. 532). The explanation is that after the group in rising rhythm (1-2') there is a double reason for the pause; firstly, because of the emphasis, and secondly, to mark the end of the group. After a group in falling rhythm (1'-2) there is a pause only for the latter reason, for the pause that is naturally made after giving emphasis falls in this case in the middle of the group. Even with unmeaning sounds, then, groups in rising rhythm tend to detach themselves more sharply, while falling rhythm tends to produce a more smooth and even continuity of flow; in musical terms the effects are

respectively staccato and legato. In actual verse, however, these effects may be increased or reduced by different distributions of words with more than one syllable; for instance, diaeresis (*v. infra*, XI. 6) will increase the staccato and decrease the legato effect.<sup>1</sup>

Whether it represents any real difference or not, the distinction between rising and falling rhythm may conveniently be utilized for descriptive purposes, as may also the classical nomenclature for different feet or combinations of syllables. Neither, however, should be regarded as implying anything as to the constitution of the ictus, and the latter is purely analogical.

In rising rhythm the words arrange themselves so that the movement seems to start from a low level (of stress, impressiveness, or whatever it may be) and rise to a higher level,<sup>2</sup> so that in each foot the ictus falls at the end, i.e. arsis follows thesis; e.g.

The wáy | was lóng; | the wínd | was còld

In falling rhythm the movement starts from a high level and falls to the lower, so that the ictus falls at the beginning of each foot and arsis precedes thesis; e.g.

Léarned of | évery | bírd its | lán-guage.

§ 13. In traditional classical prosody a foot composed of a long syllable followed by a short, with a quantitative ratio of 2 : 1, was called a *trochaeus* (— ∪, or *choreus*); a long syllable followed by two shorts in the ratio 2 : 1 : 1, a *dactylus* (— ∪ ∪); a combination (not strictly a foot) of a long syllable followed by three shorts, a *paeon primus* (— ∪ ∪ ∪). It is convenient to use these names for modern English metrical feet of analogous arrangement, although they may not have the same fixed internal relations.

A foot in falling rhythm may then be called a *trochee*, *dactyl*, or *first paeon* respectively according as the arsis is followed by a thesis of one, two, or three syllables. A foot in rising rhythm may be called an *iamb*, *anapaest*, or *fourth paeon* respectively according as the arsis is preceded by a thesis of one, two, or three syllables.

A classical *spondee* was a foot of two equal long syllables (— —).

<sup>1</sup> See also note to Ch. XIV, § 2, p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Bridges says, 'These terms depend on the tendency of an accented syllable to be spoken at a higher pitch than an unaccented syllable . . .' (*Prosody of Milton*, p. 78). But anything more than a tendency should not be assumed, for pitch is too uncertain a factor in the ictus to form the basis of a definition. The rise or fall is one of impressiveness. In any case the terms themselves are not quite satisfactory, but they are now established.

Amongst other combinations of syllables were the *pyrrhic* (υ υ) and *tribrach* (υ υ υ). Other names, even in Greek, represented not feet but certain recurrent combinations of syllables, usually equivalent to two feet: e.g. *cretic*  $\text{♩} \cdot \text{♩} | \text{♩} | \text{♩} \cdot \text{♩} | \text{♩}$ , *choriambus*  $\text{♩} \cdot \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \cdot | \text{♩} \cdot \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \cdot |$

## ADDENDA

## I. ON ARSIS AND THESIS

The original meaning of *ἄρσις* was 'a raising or lifting as of the foot in walking', and so of course also in dancing. The strong beat in primitive song was probably therefore marked by striking or 'placing' the foot on the ground, *θέσις*. So at a much later time, when poetry was not accompanied by music or dancing, the reciter would still doubtless beat time with foot or hand to the rhythm of his verse: cf. Horace, *Serm.* i. 10. 42-3:

Pollio regum

facta canit pede ter percusso.<sup>1</sup>

Hence the part of the metrical foot in which the beat fell was originally called *θέσις*, the beat being marked by the putting down of hand or foot. The remaining part, marked by the raising of the hand or foot, was called *ἄρσις*. This was the meaning accepted by Dionysius.

A. J. Ellis thought, however, that even among the Greeks 'perhaps the original meaning [of *arsis*] was the raising of the voice to a higher pitch'; but in this case, by what metaphor comes *thesis* to be applied to the lowering of the voice? Liddell and Scott, 1845, give for *thesis*, 'the last half of the foot, in which the voice falls'. Later Latin grammarians, e.g. Priscian, certainly applied the terms to the voice, and probably to the rise to greater stress or force, as by the fifth century A.D. stress or intensity-accent had resumed its original importance in verse-rhythm. *Arsis* then came to mean that part of the foot which received the beat; *thesis*, the remainder. The latter usage is the more prevalent among modern metrists (O.E.D. *Arsis*. 'In modern acceptation: the strong syllable in English metre . . .'), and is therefore adopted in this book.

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Palmer thinks Orelli is wrong in taking this as referring to the accompanying beat of the foot; he says *pede* means 'metre', without however giving any support for his version. Of course the reference is to 'triple measure', i.e. trimeter; but in any case the phrase *pede percusso* refers back to a period when the foot did beat time.

## II. ON THE ACTUAL LOCATION OF THE ICTUS

For accurate purposes one would have to measure verse-rhythm from ictus to ictus. The actual position of what might be called the centre of gravity of each foot, i. e. the point of greatest emphasis, is of some interest, if not of importance. If a reciter marks with a beat of his finger the incidence of each rhythmical beat, it usually coincides with the beginning of the vowel sound in the arsis. This represents the motor rhythm. In the perceptual rhythm it would be slightly later. M. Verrier's experiments seemed to show that even for the singer the beat comes after the implosion, and for the reader, reaction-time being eliminated, the beat coincides with the first complete vibration of the strong vowel (*op. cit.* iii, p. 85).

It has generally been found convenient, however, to let foot-divisions coincide with the minima of speech energy, i.e. fall between syllables. This is probably accurate enough for ordinary purposes, but it may be plausibly contended that in this case a falling rhythm scheme probably represents the more accurate time-division. In such a line as

The *shĭp* | which *fĭred* | the *shŏt* | that *brŏached* | our *fŏe*  
the complex sounds of *fired* and *broached* continue for so long after the commencement of the vowel sound that they almost appear to overflow into the next foot, so that if it were not for the advantage of representing differences of cadence

The | *shĭp* which | *fĭred* the | *shŏt* that | *brŏached* our | *fŏe*  
might be preferred as showing more exactly the equal periodicity.

## III

### PROSE AND VERSE—SECONDARY RHYTHM

§ 1. RHYTHMICAL movement of speech-sound marked off into equal measures by the occurrence of a stronger or more impressive sound at regular intervals—is this a complete account of the formal elements of poetry? Does it differentiate poetry from prose? It is asserted that what we commonly call prose is often rhythmical; and, if this is true, rhythm is not even a formal differentia of poetry. Doubtless in many prose passages the syllables which are stressed as having greater mental importance are separated in reading by fairly regular intervals of time. And indeed some inquirers think they can find a rhythmical tendency in all language; but in prose it

is, in a passage of any considerable length, usually no more than a tendency, and is quite unobtrusive, only to be found when we look for it, and even then often only by some straining. In poetry, on the other hand, rhythmical movement seems inevitable and cannot be overlooked. In prose, too, rhythm is felt to be intermittent, not sustained and regularly continuous as in verse. It is changing in character, not homogeneous; i.e. the time-intervals vary in different sentences, even if within the individual sentences they are more than approximately equal. In fact it is only in a loose sense rhythmical, whereas in poetry rhythm is systematic. Mr. Arthur Symonds says that 'there is in prose, whenever it is good prose, but not necessarily inherent in it, a certain rhythm, much laxer than that of verse, not indeed bound by formal laws at all'. In verse, on the other hand, rhythm *is* inherent, is not lax but strict, and *is* bound by formal laws.

§ 2. The first way in which verse is more systematic than prose is that the primary rhythm is more unmistakable and more stable, because a particular type of rhythm has been selected as the normal basis for the movement. In analysis some one particular kind of foot is so continuously predominant that it stands out clearly as the base-foot of the metre, and we are therefore justified in speaking of iambic rhythm, anapaestic rhythm, &c. The iambic scheme, or whichever it may be, becomes so firmly established in the mind that occasional variations in the composition of the thesis or weight of the ictus will not disestablish the rhythm in any way. In prose a standard foot is not so unmistakable, and what rhythm there is runs spasmodically, and constantly breaks down.<sup>1</sup>

§ 3. There is, however, more than this to distinguish poetry and prose. If we produce or attend to any simple rhythmical series, we shall probably notice a tendency to group the small units of primary rhythm into larger sections. This means that there may be present, objectively or subjectively, a secondary rhythm

<sup>1</sup> There are, of course, examples of poetry where two types of foot, e.g. iamb and anapaest, are so freely intermixed that immediate perception would not tell us which was the dominant foot. But usually in these cases the feet are patently equivalent and congruent, and run to the same time-scheme throughout; and probably too, the element of secondary, if not also of tertiary, rhythm (discussion of which is to follow) enters as a differentia. Usually where one fails the other is more prominent, or else the example falls on or beyond the vague border line.

in material already primarily rhythmical. Physiologically such grouping is called for in order to provide, in the case of vocal utterance, a pause for the taking of breath. Psychologically, too, it arises because the range of attention is limited. There is then a natural tendency to pause at certain regular intervals, and on this tendency is based the division into *lines* or *verses* which is made so evident in the printing of poetry.

In iambic verse as many as five feet can without straining be brought within the compass of a line regarded as a 'breathing-time' unit; six or seven feet demand a pause in the middle. This regular caesura or *coupe* was also significantly called in France *repos* or *reprise d'haleine*. Such a pause is often welcomed in lines of five feet, and has sometimes been regarded as essential. Psychologically it would appear that the mind cannot grasp as a unitary group more than six feet, so that in seven-foot lines the cutting has usually been so marked that the line does not hold together, and a pair of such lines falls into four lines alternately of four and three feet. This subject will receive fuller treatment in the next chapter; it is mentioned here in order to illustrate how this grouping and division is not a mere affair of tradition or empty convention, but results from the conditions in which poetry arises. Over and above the primary rhythm which is the basis of poetical expression, natural conditions give rise to a secondary rhythm which manifests itself by the primarily rhythmical material falling into divisions of limited and regular or symmetrically varying lengths, viz. lines or verses.

§ 4. We see therefore that even had prose a fairly strict rhythm, it would not be verse until it had come under other laws governing its form. In both prose and verse the rhythmical movement of sound corresponds to the movement of thought, but it is by that thought-movement alone that the divisions and groups of prose are determined. Not until it also enters into structural schemes which depend on the co-ordination of sound-material as distinct from, though not divorced from, thought-material, i. e. not until it is embodied in systematic metrical forms, does it become verse. It is metre then, and not merely rhythm, which differentiates prose from verse; and metre involves a systematically regular or proportionate arrangement of unmistakably rhythmical language, so that it falls into easily recognizable patterns and schemes, and so that a more or less definite normal or standard may be established.

Metre, however, as we have seen, is not an artificial arrangement, but an organic scheme evolved from the vital inner necessities of poetic expression; it is not an arbitrary imposition, but an essential form.

§ 5. It follows from what has been said that we can state the length of a modern English verse in feet or measures. The English terms 'four-foot', 'five-foot', &c., are quite adequate, but Greek terms have also been used regularly, so that verses of two, three, four, five, six, and seven feet respectively have been called dimeter, trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, hexameter, and heptameter. Since the Greek 'measure' (μέτρον) was sometimes a double foot (διποδία), so that an iambic trimeter contained three pairs of iambs,<sup>1</sup> there is a certain objection to this terminology; and although there is little risk of confusion in Modern English, it is as well to use the English terms, though any one who prefers Greek terms may use *dipody*, *pentapody*, etc., without fear. The standard of a particular metre can then be formulated by reference to the predominating kind of foot, and the number of feet in the line; e.g. four-foot trochaic, five-foot iambic, six-foot dactylic. Certain non-descriptive names are in use. The alexandrine was in France a line of twelve full syllables; in England it refers to a corresponding line of six iambs. Heroic verse is five-foot iambic. Of another classical range of terms, septenary is the only one that has been used much in English, and that only of the Middle English line of seven, usually iambic, feet. The propriety of such descriptive names as octosyllabic, or four-beat, or four-stress metre will be discussed at a later stage.

§ 6. We have seen that secondary rhythm involves the organization of primarily rhythmical material into equal or proportionate sections or groups; but the question arises, 'How are these groups or sections marked off one from another?'

(a) The end of the verse may be marked by some special attribute of sound such as those considered above as possible exponents of primary rhythm: quantity, stress, pitch, and tone-colour or quality. Taking these again in reverse order, we at once find what we want in tone-quality, which was used in Arabic, as well as in Germanic and Romance languages.

Vocalic assonance, i.e. agreement of final stressed vowel sounds,

<sup>1</sup> 'Inuéntus nom|en índidit | Scortó mihi.'



has been used in Spanish and Old French (and in Middle English in default of full rime) to mark the end of lines :

Tant ad seiniet, li oil li sunt trublet ;  
Ne loinz ne pres no poet vedeir si cler  
Que reconnoisse nesun hume mortel.

Agreement of consonants has similarly been used in Icelandic and Keltic. Full rime, agreement of stressed vowel sounds and all following consonant (and vowel) sounds, has become regular in modern European languages.

Alliteration, the agreement of initial sounds, although it never marked the actual end of a verse, has been used systematically in Old English and other Old Germanic languages to hold together the two parts of a full line and at the same time help to distinguish it from its neighbours :

Oft *Scyld* *Scefing*                      *sceapena* *breafum*  
*Monegum* *mægþum*                    *meodo-setla* *ofteah*

In so far as pitch, stress, and quantity are used to mark the ictus of primary rhythm, they are not available as a distinctive signal for divisions of secondary rhythm in English. In French, however, where distinctions of accent and quantity in the body of the line were not sufficiently pronounced to be made a regular basis of metre, accent, in conjunction with rime (or assonance), does play an important part in marking secondary rhythm. The last fully sounded syllable of the line (i. e. other than 'mute' -e) bears a distinct accent.

(δ) In classical Greek and Latin some particular combination of sounds was often used to mark the end of the line. In the epic hexameter the penultimate foot was regularly a dactyl and the last foot a spondee (or trochee, which by reason of time taken from the final pause became equivalent to a spondee) ; whereas a spondee might be substituted for any of the first four dactyls.<sup>1</sup> In elegiacs the alternate (so-called pentameter) lines end in a monosyllabic foot, and since spondaic substitution is excluded from the second half, the scheme is very distinct : <sup>2</sup>

— ∪ ∪ | — ∪ ∪ | — ^ | — ∪ ∪ | — ∪ ∪ | — ^  
— — | — — | — — | — — | — — | — —

<sup>1</sup> The law that in the last two feet the ictus should coincide with the tonic word-accent (a pitch-accent) must have emphasized the division of secondary rhythm still further.

<sup>2</sup> Ovid makes the ending still more unmistakable by the invariable use of a disyllabic word.

In this connexion it is noteworthy that the most careful writers of English heroic blank verse have instinctively been very sparing in their use of any foot but an iamb at the end of the verse, for any weakness or indecision at this important place impairs the metrical character of the verse.

(c) The only other possible mark in blank verse is the pause by which, as we have seen, primarily rhythmical units are instinctively divided into groups. In Old English such a pause was very prominent.

(d) When, in ways presently to be examined, this final pause is overridden and obscured or weakened, the only remaining guide (save to the eye) is the ear's immediate estimate of the volume of sound. If the pause is constantly obscured, the secondary rhythm fails and the metrical scheme of the verse will depend on skilful preservation of the primary rhythm. If this is relaxed, the result will be more or less rhythmical prose.

## IV

### SUSPENSORY PAUSES—MEDIAL AND FINAL.

§ 1. 'FOR I, being simple, thought to work His will, and have but stricken with the sword in vain; and all whereon I lean'd in wife and friend is traitor to my peace, and all my realm reels back into the beast, and is no more.'

If this passage be read as we ordinarily read prose, we naturally make distinct pauses in all the places marked by punctuation, and also probably after the word *friend*, because at each of these places there is a division in the sense or flow of thought. These are *sense pauses*; they are found both in prose and in verse, marking off sections in the sound-movement which coincide with divisions in the sense or thought movement.

§ 2. The movement of the language is strictly rhythmical, and it is therefore suitable material for verse, but it is also capable of division into those regular lengths which are called lines or verses, each containing a fixed number of feet. When this metrical arrangement (in five-foot iambic verses) is formally given,

For I, || being simple, || thought to work His will, ||  
And have but stricken with the sword in vain; ||  
And all whereon I lean'd in wife and friend ||  
Is traitor to my peace, || and all my realm  
Reels back into the beast, || and is no more. ||

the sense-pauses remain as they were. There is, however, apart from, or in addition to the sense-pauses, a generally-felt tendency to mark the metrical divisions by a slight pause at the end of the verse, wherever the sense-movement does not actually forbid it. Such a pause may be called a *metrical pause*: its function being to mark off, theoretically at least, the units of secondary rhythm, whereas sense-pauses mark off phrases in the movement of thought.

§ 3. While metrical pauses occur—whether actually or theoretically—at regular or proportionate intervals as determined by the metrical law, the position of the sense-pauses depends on the grammatical and rhetorical arrangement of words, and need not show any regularity of distribution. Furthermore it will be observed that the sense-pauses need not be and are not of any uniform strength; the pause after *friend* in the quotation from Tennyson is distinctly weaker than those after *will*, *vain*, *peace*, and *more*.

§ 4. There is clearly, then, considerable scope for variety in the arrangement and strength of pauses in verse. In general this element depends on the greater or less predominance in the poet's mind of the metrical scheme as bringing out the effects of secondary rhythm. When poets are deeply conscious of the need for regularity, for law and order, they tend to emphasize the strict metrical organization. They do this partly by making the primary rhythm more uniform, partly by making the divisions of the secondary rhythm more conspicuous. We are here concerned with the latter effect, which is brought about by making sense-pauses fall regularly at the end of the verse, and so coincide with the metrical divisions. When the two kinds of pause coincide in this way, the check to the rhythm is made extremely obtrusive, and such lines are called *end-stopped*.

Shall burning Ætna, if a sage requires,  
Forget to thunder, and recall her fires?  
On air or sea new motions be imprest,  
Oh blameless Bethel! to relieve thy breast?  
When the loose mountain trembles from on high  
Shall gravitation cease if you go by?  
Or some old temple, nodding to its fall,  
For Chartres' head reserve the hanging wall?

(Pope, *Essay on Man*, iv. 123-30.)

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,

Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm—  
A little thing may harm a wounded man;  
Yet I thy best will all perform at full,  
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.'

(Tennyson, *Passing of Arthur*, 207-12.)

§ 5. Another passage from Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, however, affords a striking contrast in movement:

But Arthur, looking downward as he passed,  
Felt the light of her eyes into his life  
Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and *pitch'd*  
*His tents* beside the forest. Then *he drave*  
*The heathen*; after, slew the beast, *and fell'd*  
*The forest*, letting in the sun, and *made*  
*Broad pathways* for the hunter and the knight,  
And so return'd.

(Tennyson, *Coming of Arthur*, 55-62.)

Keats, in the following lines from *Sleep and Poetry* (184-99), expressed, both implicitly and explicitly, his strong disapproval of the 'end-stopped' versification of the eighteenth century:

Men were thought wise who could not *understand*  
*His glories*; with a puling infant's force  
They swayed about upon a rocking-horse  
And called it Pegasus. Ah, dismal soul'd,  
The winds of heaven blew, the ocean *roll'd*  
*Its gathering waves*—ye felt it not. The blue  
Bared its eternal bosom, and *the dew*  
*Of summer nights* collected still *to make*  
*The morning precious*: beauty was awake!  
Why were ye not awake? But ye were dead  
To things ye knew not of,—were closely *wed*  
*To musty laws* lined out with wretched rule  
And compass vile: so that ye taught *a school*  
*Of dolts* to smoothe, inlay, and clip, and fit,  
'Till like the certain wands of Jacob's wit  
Their verses tallied.

Here the sense, with the corresponding movement of rhythm, is frequently carried on into the next verse, and is said to 'run on' or 'overflow' from one line into the other. The end of one line being made syntactically continuous with the beginning of the next, the metrical pause is obscured or overridden; the sense is, as Milton said, 'variously drawn out from one verse into another'. By means of this preservation of continuity between the metrical units, they can be dovetailed, as it were, into larger rhetorical units of irregular length (depending on the development of the thought), such as are called 'verse-paragraphs'. Milton, of course, provides

the best examples of these; see the opening of *Paradise Lost*, and the following (*P. L.* i. 34-44):

Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile  
 Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceiv'd  
 The Mother of Mankind, what time his pride  
 Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his host  
 Of rebel Angels, by whose aid aspiring  
 To set himself in glory above his peers,  
 He trusted to have equal'd the Most High,  
 If he oppos'd; and with ambitious aim  
 Against the throne and monarchy of God  
 Raised impious war in Heav'n and battle proud  
 With vain attempt.

Lines end in the middle of such phrases as *on the secret top | Of Oreb; didst inspire | That shepherd; I thence | Invoke thy aid; to soar | Above the Aonian mount; deceived | The Mother of Mankind; his pride | Had cast; all his host | Of rebel angels; aspiring | To set himself*.<sup>1</sup>

§ 6. Overflow or *enjambement*, then, is of very great importance as a means of binding lines together into a verse-paragraph, which would be practically impossible with what Professor Saintsbury calls 'single-moulded' lines. It serves thus not merely to ensure variety, but also to achieve the larger harmonic effects of verse. Again, by tending to obscure or pass over what are often considered artificial divisions, it helps to give an impression of ease and naturalness such as is essential in dramatic blank verse. The dangers of its excessive use, which with other and allied licences brought about a great weakening of metrical effect, are exemplified in the Jacobean drama. A necessary reaction to the 'end-stopped' verse of Shakespeare's earlier plays commenced in the age of Dryden and culminated in that of Pope, but itself went to the opposite extreme, so that the rigidity of their metrical rule excited the revolt of some of the greater Romantics. The Victorian age was marked by a growing admiration for the sane moderation of Chaucer's heroic

<sup>1</sup> In connexion with this last example it may be noted that feminine endings (or anacrusis in falling rhythms) and weak or light endings (see Ch. VIII, § 11, note) help to override the final pause and obscure the metrical division by producing a more continuous rhythm; sometimes, as in the later Elizabethan drama, disastrously. Rime, on the other hand, accentuates the metrical division, and its use was for that reason advocated by Dr. Johnson. Every verse, he considered, should be 'a distinct system of sounds; and this distinctness is obtained and preserved by the artifice of rhyme'.

verse, and a skilful admixture of both systems by the greater metrical artists.

In rimed verse some poets, e.g. Keats and Morris, often make one couplet overflow into another, as well as making the first line run on into the second. The French name *enjambement* is sometimes confined to this type of overflow. It is less frequent between larger stanzas, but Shelley's *Triumph of Life* has very few of its *terza rima* stanzas self-contained. A few of his more elaborate stanzas, e.g. the chorus *Life may change*, show bold *enjambement*, as do several of the rime-royal stanzas of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* and the four-line stanzas of Tennyson's *In Memoriam*.<sup>1</sup>

§ 7. Since sense-pauses are governed principally by the thought-movement, it is clear that, whether they coincide with the final metrical pause or not, they are liable to occur at any place within the line. And such variation in position is obviously an important means of avoiding monotony of cadence.

The following lines give examples of the pause in every position :

Mourn, ¶ knowing it will go along with me  
And there, ¶ that day when the great light of heaven  
For ever: ¶ but as yet thou shalt not pass  
When all is lost, ¶ and wife and child with wail  
To all high places ¶ like a golden cloud  
And brake the petty kings, ¶ and fought with Rome  
There came on Arthur sleeping ¶ Gawain kill'd  
Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere : ¶ ' My king  
Knighted by Arthur at his crowning, ¶ spake.

Sometimes there is no marked internal pause :

In the island valley of Avilion  
Far other is this battle in the west.

Frequently there are two internal pauses in the same line :

Whereof the chill, ¶ to him who breathed it, ¶ drew  
A bitter wind, ¶ clear from the North, ¶ and blew

§ 8. In Pope and other poets of his time, pauses occur with almost unfailing regularity not only at the end of the line, but also as near as possible to its middle, i. e. after the fourth or fifth or sixth syllable, so that one would conclude that this position was chosen deliberately and in accordance with precept or theory. Precept and theory are, in fact, found in early Elizabethan treatises on the poetic art. Puttenham's opinion was that 'in every long

<sup>1</sup> See below on Rime and Stanza.

verse the *Cesure* ought to be kept precisely, if it were but to serve as a law to correct the licentiousnesse of rymers, besides that it pleaseth the eare better & sheweth more cunning in the maker by following the rule of his restraint' (*Arte of English Poesie*, II. v); and he lays down that a verse of ten syllables must have the caesura after the fourth. Although Gascoigne says the caesura 'is at the discretion of the wryter', he gives his opinion that 'in a verse of tenne it will best be placed at the ende of the first foure sillables; in a verse of twelve in the midst' (*Certayne Notes of Instruction*, § 13).

As the name caesura shows, the idea of an internal metrical pause in a fixed position is ultimately derived from classical verse; but directly it came from the French. In the decasyllabic metre of the Old French epic poetry, its place was fixed usually after the fourth syllable,

Desuz lui met ◡ s'espée e l'olifant

or frequently after the fifth (epic caesura) when that was not fully sounded,

En son visāge ◡ sa color at perdue  
De tantes teres     cume li bers cunquist

or more rarely after the sixth.

In the classical French alexandrine the *césure* or *coupe* regularly divided the line into equal *hémistiches* of six syllables each; but this equal bisection was deliberately avoided in the Greek and Latin hexameter. In the *vers octosyllabe* a caesura, as such, was not considered necessary.

Chaucer did not adhere closely to the French rule, but two centuries later Gascoigne, whose *Steel Glas* was printed with the caesuras shown by commas, observed the tradition faithfully:

This is the cause (beleve me now my Lorde)  
That Realmes do rewe, from high prosperity,  
That kings decline, from princely government,  
That Lords do lacke, their ancestors good wil,  
That knights consume, their patrimonie still,  
That gentlemen, do make the merchant rise. . . .

(Arber's reprint, pp. 54-5.)

This marking of caesuras where there is no sense-pause proves that they were considered to be strictly metrical pauses, as necessary as those which mark the end of a line. The function of the caesura, which was not always recognized by the theorists, is suggested by Ronsard's expression *reprise d'haleine* or *repos* (this latter

being still used); for although the physiological necessity for a break is not so great in the decasyllabic or five-foot verse as in longer lines, a medial pause is nevertheless welcomed by a natural instinct to economize energy.

§ 9. In later Elizabethan times, free departure from the French tradition was due partly perhaps to Italian influence, as it had been in Chaucer's case, but more still to the necessities of a really dramatic blank verse. The metrical caesura was disregarded or overridden just as the final pause was, and the thought-rhythm asserted itself and arranged its own pauses or 'breaks'. Since these syntactical pauses fell at all parts of the line, they could no longer in strictness be called caesuras. The eighteenth century, however, with its worship of strict law and its admiration for French models, returned to the medial caesura as well as to the single-moulded line, the two being in fact organically connected. Consequently in their verse one is perhaps justified in assuming a caesura where there is very little grammatical reason for a break:

Shall gravitation cease ♪ if you go by  
Expatiate free    o'er all this scene of Man;  
What vary'd being ♪ peoples every star  
May tell why Heav'n ♪ has made us as we are.

although in a line like

Or ask of yonder argent fields above

it is difficult to allow any kind of break at all.

It must be observed, too, that even in verse of the romantic type, which admits no strict law on the subject, the break or logical pause falls most commonly about the middle.<sup>1</sup>

But when the verse preserves its integral character as a metrical unit, this tendency is much more marked and regular. However ill-adapted for narrative, which demands a continuous forward movement, verse with regular medial and final breaks had advantages for purposes of satire and didactic or reflective poetry, and the more or less evenly balanced bipartition proved itself admirably suited to the pointed antithetical style of Pope. This is well illustrated by the lines quoted by Leigh Hunt, and thus divided:

<sup>1</sup> In various passages, as unbroken as possible, from different plays of Shakespeare's middle period, I have found that lines in which the pause fell after the second or third or within the third foot were more numerous than the sum of the remaining complete lines, whether in these (i) the pauses fell earlier or later (ii) there was no pause at all, or (iii) there were two or more pauses.



On her white breast      a sparkling cross she wore,  
 Which Jews might kiss      and infidels adore,  
 Her lively looks      a sprightly mind disclose,  
 Quick as her eyes,      and as unfixed as those.  
 Favours to none,      to all her smiles extends,  
 Oft she rejects,      but never once offends.

Pope himself in a letter said that 'every nice ear must have observed that in any smooth English verse of ten syllables, there is naturally a pause either at the fourth, fifth, or sixth syllable', but 'to preserve an exact harmony and variety none of these pauses should be continued above three lines together without the interposition of another, else it will be apt to weary the ear with one continual tone'.

§ 10. With regard to the position of the internal pause in heroic verse, some attempt at a rationale was made by Johnson (*Rambler*, No. 90).

'As harmony'—by which he apparently means what we call rhythm—'is the end of poetical measures, no part of a verse ought to be so separated from the rest as not . . . to show, by the disposition of the tones, that it is part of a verse.' Since 'the order and regularity of accents cannot well be perceived in a succession of fewer than three syllables', the poet 'should never make a full pause at less distance than that of three syllables from the beginning or end of a verse.' This rule, he admits, cannot be universal;<sup>1</sup> 'something may be allowed to variety, and something to the adaptation of numbers to the subject; but it will be found generally necessary, and the ear will seldom fail to suffer by its neglect.'

If we have a pause after the first or second syllable, or after the eighth or ninth, it means in general that these short sections of the verse are in very close syntactical connexion with the preceding or succeeding lines:

Defaming as impure what God declares  
 Pure; and commands to some, leaves free to all.  
    nor could the Muse defend  
 Her Son.  
 He ended, and the Son gave signal high  
 To the bright minister that watch'd: he blew  
 His trumpet.

<sup>1</sup> In fact it would have been more in accord with his principle if he had insisted on four syllables outright, for strictly no rhythm is established by  $xa | x ||$ , whereas it is set up by  $xa | xa ||$ .

The rhythmical character of these sections is indeed preserved only by taking the lines as continuous in rhythm, and frequent recourse to this weakens the integral character of the lines as metrical entities.

Where there is no such overflow to keep up the rhythm, even at the expense of metrical integrity, a strong pause in these places, though often justified by the emphasis gained, would, if used with any frequency, certainly tend to produce an unpleasant jolting effect and even disruption of the rhythmic flow. Browning gives many examples :

... Yes—no : I am past that now.  
Gone 'tis : I cannot shut my soul to fact.  
(*Colombe's Birthday*, v.)

Men tell me of truth now—' False ! ' I cry :  
Of beauty—' A mask, friend ! Look beneath !'  
And the best we wish to what lives, is—death ;  
(*The Worst of It*.)

Put me where I may look at him ! True peach,  
Rosy and flawless : how I earned the prize !  
Draw close : that conflagration of my church  
—What then ? So much was saved if aught were missed !  
My sons, ye would not be my death ? Go dig . . .  
Did I say basalt for my slab, sons ? Black—  
(*The Bishop orders his Tomb*.)

And the way to end dreams is to break them, stand,  
Walk, go : then help me to stand, walk, and go.  
(*The Ring and the Book*, vi.)

' When the pause falls upon the third syllable, or the seventh, the harmony [i. e. rhythm] is better preserved ; but as the third and seventh are weak syllables, the period leaves the ear unsatisfied, and in expectation of the remaining part of the verse.'

Confounded though immór|tal. Büt | his doom

' The rest in the fifth place has the same inconvenience.'

This has much truth in it, at all events in respect of heavy pauses ; but on the other hand this very establishment of an expectancy has often a counterbalancing utility in that it tends to preserve the integrity of the verse as a metrical unit.

§ II. It is necessary to distinguish degrees of pause, as in fact Johnson does : ' It may be established as a rule that a pause which

concludes a period should be made for the most part upon a strong syllable, as the fourth and sixth; but these pauses which only suspend the sense may be placed upon the weaker.' So that, for instance in *Paradise Lost*, iv. 891-9:

And boldly venture to whatever place 891  
 Farthest from páin, ¶ where thou mightst hope to change  
 Torment with éase, ¶ and sóonest recompense  
 Dole with delight; ¶ which in this place I sought:  
 To thee no réas|on, ¶ who | knowst only good, 895  
 But evil hast not tried. ¶ And wilt object  
 His will who bôund | us? ¶ Lét | him surer bar  
 His iron gátes, ¶ if he intends our stay  
 In that dark dú|ance. ¶ 899

the masculine caesuras of 894 and 896 satisfy the ear at the full pauses better than the feminine caesuras in 897 and 899; and the feminine caesura of 895 suits the half-pause better than the masculine caesuras in 892, 893, 898. This rule too, however, must be qualified by the consideration above mentioned.

§ 12. He concludes by affirming that 'The noblest and most majestic pauses which our versification admits, are upon the fourth and sixth syllables, which are both strongly sounded in a pure and regular verse, and at either of which the line is so divided that both members participate of harmony [i. e. rhythm].' 'But far above all others . . . is the rest upon the sixth syllable, which, taking in a complete compass of sound . . . makes a full and solemn close.' Johnson's argument (see particularly § 10 above) is based mainly on the self-contained type of verse which he considered best, but it is noteworthy that taking an average of two series of 100 lines each in *Paradise Lost*, Books II and VII, I found the percentages to be as follows:—no pause,  $13\frac{1}{2}$ ; two or three pauses,  $10\frac{1}{2}$ ; pause after sixth syllable, 25; after fourth, 16; after fifth,  $9\frac{1}{2}$ ; after seventh,  $7\frac{1}{2}$ ; after eighth,  $7\frac{1}{2}$ ; after second, 5; after third,  $4\frac{1}{2}$ ; after first and ninth,  $\frac{1}{2}$  each. These figures show a distinct preference for the pause after the sixth syllable, and then for that after the fourth; the next in favour are lines without pause, or with two pauses; but pauses are allowed in all positions.<sup>1</sup> This is not without significance for its bearing on the way in which Milton's lines keep their integral character as lines despite the frequent *enjambement*.

<sup>1</sup> For these statistics two syllables capable of elision are counted as one.

§ 13. *Masculine Caesura.* The caesura or break is called *masculine* or *strong* when it occurs immediately after the arsis or heavy syllable of a foot; i. e. in rising rhythm after the last syllable and in falling rhythm after the first of the foot.

Know thén | thyself, ¶ presúme | not Gód | to scán  
Nóthing was | héard in the | róom ¶ but the | húrrying | pén of the | strípling.

*Feminine Caesura.* It is called *feminine* or *weak* when it occurs immediately after a light syllable, i. e. after or within the thesis. In rising rhythm it falls within the foot, in falling rhythm either at the end of a foot, or, in the case of a dactyl, within it.

Who cálls | the cóun|cil, ¶ státes | the cér|tain dáy  
This is the | fórest prim|áeval, ¶ the | múrmuring | pines and the | hémlocks.

*Epic Caesura.* In French verse the caesura normally fell after a fully sounded syllable; sometimes however in the old heroic verse the caesural pause was partly filled by an extra atonic syllable, e. g. one containing a so-called 'mute e', which was not counted in the line. This was called the *epic caesura*, and may be regarded as a special case of weak caesura.

In English heroic verse it is perhaps possible to consider certain light syllables before a pause as hypermetrical, i. e. as not belonging to any foot, but falling within and occupying part of the pause. In this case the term 'epic caesura' might with advantage be adopted in English.

As ány ráv|enes féth(ere ¶ it shóon | for-blák (Cant. Tales, A. 2144.)

What sholde he stúd(ie ¶ and make hymselfen wood. (ib. A. 184.)

For further notice of these cases see Chapter X.

*Dramatic Caesura.* Similar examples, however, are much more common in dramatic verse, particularly at points where one speech ends and another begins:

Móre | than his réas(on. ¶ But 'tís | a cóm|mon próof, (J. Caes. II. i. 21.)

To sáy 'King Rích(ard': ¶ aláck the héavy dáy (Rich. II, III. iii. 8.)

When I' have shów'd the unfit(ness,— ¶

Re-enter OSWALD.

How nów, Óswald! (Lear, I. iv. 356.)

And yét I lóve (him. ¶

Yórk.

Make wáy, unrúly wóman! (Rich. II, v. ii. 110.)

No móre, sweet Hám(let! ¶

Hamlet.

A múrderer and a villain. (Hamlet, III. iv. 96.)

For these cases the term 'dramatic caesura' would be more appropriate than 'epic caesura', especially when there is a change of speaker, or some other interruption, as in the last examples.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Old French lyric *vers décasyllabe* the caesura sometimes occurred in the

§ 14. The traditional teaching of elocutionists has been that poetry should be read as if it were prose, with emphasis on those syllables only which would carry stress in prose, and with pauses only where the sense requires it. On the other hand, R. L. Stevenson expressed himself vigorously to the effect that 'No verse can ever sound otherwise than trivial when uttered with the delivery of prose'. With regard to Milton's blank verse Johnson said, 'The variety of pauses so much boasted by the lovers of blank verse, changes the measures of an English poet to the periods of a declaimer; and there are only a few skilful and happy readers of Milton, who enable their audience to perceive where the lines end or begin. *Blank verse*, said an ingenious critick, *seems to be verse only to the eye*.' Johnson was inclined to charge the fault to the poet, and asked for 'the preservation of every verse unmingled with another, as a distinct system of sounds'; and for this end recommended the use of rime. But a good reader will not fail to mark the end of a line, even in verse where overflow is so abundant as in Milton's, although it will be a matter of delicacy to avoid excess.

Our greatest poets for many centuries have been careful to observe the division of verse into lines, and this fact can hardly be without significance. The hearer should never be allowed to overlook these metrical pauses; they are always there, though at some times, in accordance with the sense, they are less distinctly marked than at others; perhaps, occasionally, even only ideal.

## V

### METRICAL EQUIVALENCE—TRISYLLABIC SUBSTITUTION

§ 1. WE have seen that all verse must be capable of division into *measures* or *feet* of—at least approximately—equal time length, each foot representing normally the period occupied by a metrical

regular position, viz. after the fourth syllable, but the fourth syllable was a final 'mute' *-e*, *-es* or *-ent*, which could not be accented, although it was counted in the metre and fully enunciated. This was given the name of *lyric caesura*. Some modern compilers have, without historical justification or real need, extended the term to ordinary examples of feminine caesura, i.e. breaks following a light metrical syllable in rising or falling rhythm, as in 'who calls the council' and 'This is the forest primaeval', quoted above.

beat and by the interval between it and the beat preceding or following (according to the type of verse). For example :

Where ónce | we dwélt | our náme | is héard | no móre.

OR

Háppy | fíeld or | móssy | cávern

OR

I am lórd | of the fówl | and the bríte

OR

Tóuch her not | scórnfully

OR

And héld | his crést|ed hél'm | and spéar.

If, after the familiar method of R. G. Latham, were present an ictus or accented syllable by a and an unaccented syllable by x, the formula for the feet in these passages will be respectively  $x\bar{a}$ ,  $a\bar{x}$ ,  $xx\bar{a}$ ,  $a\bar{x}x$ ,  $x\bar{a}$ . Furthermore, in any one of these passages, each line is made up of a fixed number of feet of the same type: 5  $x\bar{a}$ , 4  $a\bar{x}$ , 3  $xx\bar{a}$ , 2  $a\bar{x}x$ , 4  $x\bar{a}$ . The time-lengths of these measures therefore are, it is easy to see, likely to be uniform. But these are only examples of verse where the equivalence is most obvious; this normal scheme of arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables, though preserved with considerable rigidity by some poets, is by no means so preserved by many others, e.g. Shakespeare, Milton, Coleridge, Shelley, Tennyson, as witness the following examples from acknowledged masters of the poetic art :

On the óther síde Ádam, sóon as he héard.  
Of mán's fírst disobédience, and the frúit.

(MILTON.)

The óne red léaf, the lást of its clánn,  
That dánces as óften as dánce it cán,  
Hánging so líght and hánging so hígh  
On the tópmost twíg that looks úp at the ský.

(COLERIDGE.)

O sóul, be chánged into líttle wáter dróps.

(MARLOWE.)

Mýriads of rívulets húrrying thróugh the láwn.

(TENNYSON.)

Here several lines have more than the normal *number of syllables*, and uniformity of *syllabic* arrangement is clearly not the rule. But the lines are rhythmical in their flow of sound; the stresses fall on the ear with regularity, i. e. after equal intervals of time.

§ 2. We shall find, then, that the rhythm may be equally well preserved when two (or even three) unstressed syllables are put in the place usually occupied by one, *provided that the time taken by the utterance is the same* and that the relative positions of the arsis and thesis are unchanged. In terms of the formula, the rhythm is not necessarily broken by the substitution of a foot of the type  $x x a$  for one of the type  $x a$ , or of  $a x x$  for  $a x$ , so long as they can without unnatural effort be uttered in the same time, and are therefore of equal prosodic value.

The normal line of Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* is of the type  $x a | x a | x a | x a$ , the feet being all of two syllables, as :

The wáy | was lóng, | the wínd | was cöld.

But many verses have nine or more syllables, so that obviously there must be trisyllabic feet, and stresses separated by two unstressed syllables instead of one, e. g.

And with fēd|wood áxe | at sād|dle bōw  
 For í | am the hēir | of bōld | Bucclēugh  
 He líght|ed the mātch | of his bān|delíer  
 And the lād|ye had gōne | to her sēc|ret bōwer.

In these lines, despite the varying number of syllables, the beats of sound still occur at intervals of equal duration. The unstressed syllables of the trisyllabic feet are hurried over so that while the movement of sound is more rapid (since three syllables are put into the period usually filled by two), the duration of each foot is, approximately at least, the same as that of the disyllabic feet.

The line

Thus Ève | with cōunt|enance blíthe | her stōr|y tōld

takes the same time as it would if for the trisyllabic *countenance* were substituted the disyllabic *laughter* :

Thus Eve | with láugh|ter blíthe | her story told.

The rhythm is of course slightly different in *movement*, but the duration is unaltered.

§ 3. Such lines doubtless may often be explained by assuming that an unstressed syllable is elided or slurred, especially in cases of two vowels, separated only by a liquid consonant, or by none at all, or by the semi-vocalic *w* or *y* ; e. g.

On the ðh|er síde | Adam, soon as he heard.  
 For mán|y a pētt|y king ere Arthur came.

Myriads of rivulets hurruying through | the lawn.  
 And chiefly thou O spirit, that dost prefer  
 Before all temples th' upright heart and pure.  
 Of sorrow unfligned | and humiliation meek.  
 All judgements whether in heaven or earth | or hell.

Mr. Bridges has shown that in *Paradise Lost* they may almost all be so explained, and considers therefore that the lines were, in Milton's prosodic theory, all ten-syllabled. 'All the poetical elisions and contractions in *P. L.* may be reduced to the following four rules:

1. Open Vowels.
2. Vowels separated by the liquids *l, n, r*.
3. Final *en* [as in *heaven, given*].
4. The 2nd pers. sing. of verbs' (*Milton's Prosody*, p. 11).

§ 4. But there is no need in general to have recourse to this explanation, for in a verse whose regularity depends upon the duration of the feet it is not the number of syllables that matters, but the time occupied by each group. There are many instances from other poems where any actual elision or contraction is inconceivable.

*I beseech | your graces both to pardon me.* (Shaks., *Rich. III.*, 1. i. 84.)  
 Made Goddess of the river; still | *she retains.* (Milton, *Comus*.)  
 'Tis a month | before the month of May  
 And the spring | comes slowly up this way. (Coleridge, *Christabel*.)  
 By thy long | gray beard and glittering eye. (*Ancient Mariner*.)

Some examples quoted by Mr. Bridges from *Paradise Lost* are decidedly doubtful, e. g.

Needs must the serpent now his capital bruise (xii. 383.)  
 Of rainbows and starry eyes. The waters thus (vii. 446.)

§ 5. In view, then, of numerous examples like these, to invoke the aid of any elision theory is, in absence of special reasons such as may exist in the case of *Paradise Lost*, both unnecessary and unsatisfactory, particularly for poets who might have learnt from Coleridge's so-called 'new principle' that verse need not be governed by the number of syllables.<sup>1</sup> It is not syllabic but temporal regularity that is the basis of poetic rhythm. Therefore

<sup>1</sup> See Ch. XII, § 11.



in verse normally composed of disyllabic feet, a trisyllabic foot may be substituted, provided that

(a) the two syllables of the thesis are light and can be pronounced rapidly, so that the foot occupies only the same length of time as the neighbouring feet;

(b) the arsis and thesis keep the same relative position, i. e. thesis before arsis in rising rhythm.

§ 6. Masson rightly objected to such 'contracted utterances' as *th' Aonian*, *th' imbattled* 'as quite unnecessary inasmuch as the lines are perfectly good to the ear; even if the word *the* is fully but softly uttered according to prose custom'. Professor Saintsbury too denounces the sound of such elisions as 'utterly hideous; while the admission of the full syllables seems melodious and satisfying' (*Manual*, p. 17). His ear naturally revolts at the spoiling of *Of glory obscured* by the ugliness of *glor yobscured*; and at *om'nous*, *pop'lar*, *th'upright*, and at *abominablunutterabl and worse* 'instead of the smoothly flowing, musically rippling measure and murmur of the trisyllabically admixed cadence' (*Hist. of Eng. Prosody*, ii. 261). It is right to insist on the aesthetic adequacy of trisyllabic substitution; but the term 'elision' need not imply that syllables are actually dropped or amalgamated, i. e. that some sound is not pronounced. Probably Mr. Bridges is right in saying of Milton that 'though he printed *Th'almighty*, etc., it cannot be supposed that he wished it to be so pronounced' (*Milton's Prosody*, p. 50).

What Mr. Bridges has really shown is that Milton in *Paradise Lost* employed trisyllabic substitution only in those cases where it could be admitted most smoothly, i. e. where actual phonetic elision might conceivably take place and so in theory preserve regularity in the number of syllables. The evidence that Milton 'came to scan his verses one way and read them another' indicates that he probably held to the syllabic theory, but in practice wrote according to a very fine ear for primary rhythm as well as secondary,—i. e. according to time as marked by beats,—and to square theory with practice had to scan by means of fictions, namely, that in certain conditions two syllables might be considered prosodically equivalent to one, although phonetically distinct.

To get the full value out of Milton's or any similar verse, we must not start with a rigid preconceived scheme and read a particular tune (the iambic) into the lines, but rather let the music of the verse arise freely out of a natural reading of what we actually find.

Furthermore, the whole purpose of the extra syllables in such lines as

Myriads of rivulets hurrying through the lawn  
is defeated if the extra ripples are suppressed.

§ 7. One of the most illuminating discussions of this question is by Poe, who explains that there is no *synaeresis* or blending of the two short syllables, but that 'men soon came to see that there was no absolute necessity for adhering to the precise number of syllables, provided the time required for the whole foot was preserved inviolate.' They saw, for instance, that in such a line as

Or laugh | and shake | in Rab|elais' ea|sy chair

the equalization of the three syllables *elais ea* with the two syllables composing any of the other feet, could be readily effected by pronouncing the two syllables *elais* in double quick time. By pronouncing each of the syllables *e* and *lais* twice as rapidly as the syllable *sy*, or the syllable *in* . . . they could bring the two of them, taken together, to the length, that is to say the time, of any one short syllable. This consideration enabled them to effect the agreeable variation of three syllables in place of the uniform two. And variation was the object—variation to the ear. What sense is there, then, in supposing this object rendered null by the *blending* of the two syllables so as to render them, in absolute effect, one? Of course there must be *no* blending. Each syllable must be pronounced as distinctly as possible (or the variation is lost), but with twice the rapidity in which the ordinary short syllable is enunciated.<sup>1</sup>

There is, however, no need to confine this plastic process to the thesis: if the normal iambic foot is represented ♪ ♫, it is possible to substitute not only ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ (replacing the quaver by two semi-quavers) but also ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ or ♪ ♪ ♪ (i.e. reducing the arsis).

§ 8. In Chaucer, who was obviously influenced by the syllabic view of metre that prevailed in his early French models, there are

<sup>1</sup> Southey also declared that he 'could heap authority on authority for using two very short syllables in blank verse instead of one—they take up only the time of one. "Spirit" in particular is repeatedly placed as a monosyllable in Milton; and some of his ass-editors have attempted to print it as one, not feeling that the rapid pronunciation of the two syllables does not lengthen the verse more than the dilated sound of one.'

frequent instances of three syllables being regarded as *prosodically equivalent* to two. Most of them can be brought under some laws of contraction, elision, or slurring, such, for instance, as those stated by Ten Brink (*Chaucer's Sprache und Verskunst*, Eng. trans., § 256 et seq.):

And småle fōweles māken mēlodýe (A. 9.)

Shórt was his gōwne, with slēves lōnge and wýde (A. 93.)

The cōnstable háth of híre so grēete pitée (B. 528.)

There are however a few lines like

*With a thrēdbare cope as is a poore scoler* (A. 260.)

*Ther nas no týgre in the vāle of Galgophey* (A. 2626.)

where such elision is impossible or extremely doubtful.

Despite these verses, Ten Brink says that the *Senkung*, i.e. the unstressed part of the foot, the thesis,<sup>1</sup> 'is, from a metrical point of view, always monosyllabic; . . . the poet could under certain circumstances reduce two syllables to one . . . by syncope, synaeresis, and synzesis, an absolute monosyllable may be produced by slurring an approximate one', e.g. *hevenes, fader of* (*op. cit.*, § 300). The words 'from a metrical point of view' must be given a stronger emphasis than Ten Brink probably intended, so as to exclude the necessity of actual reduction of two syllables to one in the phonetic sense, although this may have taken place in a number of cases, as e.g.

So hoote he lōvede thát by nyghtertale. (A. 98.)

With this qualification one may accept Ten Brink's definition of 'slurring' as 'a sort of modified syncope or apocope. The vowel which is slurred does not disappear entirely, but is reduced to such an extent that together with the vowel of a preceding or following syllable it does not exceed the time of one metrical beat' (*op. cit.*, § 272). But in Chaucer, as in Milton, however the verse scheme may be preserved in theory, there are in the concrete rhythm differences of actual movement which add to its charm and help to give it that fluidity so rightly praised by Matthew Arnold.

§ 9. Although the number of syllables is not the actual basis of English poetic rhythm, as Johnson and Bysshe thought,<sup>2</sup> in practice the number of syllables that may be contained in one foot is limited.

<sup>1</sup> Rendered 'arsis' by the translator, according to what was probably the original usage; cf. Ch. II, Addendum I.

<sup>2</sup> Bysshe says that the structure of English verse 'consists in a certain number of syllables'.

This is due partly perhaps to the fact that there has, since the fourteenth century, always been a tendency towards syllabic regularity, owing primarily to the powerful influence of French metres ; but chiefly to the difficulty of pronouncing more than three syllables distinctly and at the same time rapidly enough to preserve the temporal equality of the periods.

Poe quotes a stanza in trochaic rhythm where the first trochee is substituted by a four-syllabled foot :

Many are the | thoughts that | come to | me.

and comments : ' these two feet are equal. They occupy *precisely* the same time. In fact the whole music of the line depends upon their being *made* to occupy the same time ' (*Rationale of Verse*, p. 244).

Other probable or possible examples of the substitution of four-syllabled feet are taken from Swinburne and Shakespeare :—

- (a) Blóws with a pèrfume of sòngs and of mēm|ories belóved | from a bôy  
 From the bítter delíghts of the dárk, and the fěv|erish, the fūr|tíve carěsses  
 By the mēadows of mēm|ory, the hġh|lands of hōpe, and the shóre that is  
 hġdden (Hesperia.)  
 Came flúshed from the fúll-flushed wáve, and impěr|ial, her fġot | on  
 the sēa. (Hymn to Proserpine.)
- (β) A sǎmp|le to the yóung|est, tò the mōre matŭre (Cymb. I. i. 48.)  
 I hŭmblŷ sĕt | it at your wġll ; | bùt for my mġstress (ib. IV. iii. 13.)  
 Nor when she pŭr|poses retŭrn. | Beseech your highness (ib. IV. iii. 15.)

It is to be noted that the instances from Swinburne might also be explained as cases of elision or coalescence of vowels, showing at all events that Swinburne only allowed this kind of substitution in its smoothest form. The verses from Shakespeare some would prefer to treat as alexandrines or lines of six feet. A certain colouring is given to this alternative theory with regard to heroic lines by Dryden's practice ; and in some lines better rhetorical emphasis follows from the alexandrine scansion, as in

To ĕv|ery sĕv|eral mǎn | ^ sĕv|enty-fġve | ^ drǎch(mas  
 rather than

To ĕv|ery sĕv|eral mǎn | ^ sĕv|enty-five drǎch(mas

In the verse of Mr. W. B. Yeats, however, there are indubitable instances where the four-syllabled feet cannot be explained away by any elision or alexandrine theory :

And, shaking the plumes of the grass|es and the l|eaves | of the mural glen  
 Yet weary with passions that fad|ed when the sev|en-fold seas were young  
 Were the mem|ories of the wh|ole | of my sor|row and the mēm|ories of the  
     wh|ole | of my mirth

Weak in the midst of the mead|ow, from his m|iles | in the midst of the air.  
 A starling like them that foregath|ered 'neath a m|oon | waking white as'a shell.<sup>1</sup>  
     (*Wanderings of Oisín*, iii.)

### The Gilbertian

Awáiting thè sensáti|on of a shórt, shàrp shóck,  
 Fróm a chéap and chippy ch|opper ón a bíg, bláck blóck



shows the inevitable tendency for a minor rhythm to spring up in addition to the major rhythm through the interposition of secondary accents midway between the chief stresses. But the lighter kinds of song verse provide many examples of four-syllabled feet even when the musical bar has two accents. The best example is

Why, whát a very singularly rích old mán (This)  
 This rích old mán must bē



Others are :—

Then drínk, puppy, drínk; and let évery puppy drínk  
 That is óld enough to lāp and to swallow.  
 For he'll grów into a hóund, so we'll páss the bottle róund,  
 And mérrily we'll whóop and we'll hólloa.  
 A Spánish Cavállér stood 'in his retréat . . .  
 The bléssing of my cóuntry and yóu déar.

## VI

### MONOSYLLABIC SUBSTITUTION—COMPENSATORY PAUSE

§ 1. FROM the time of Chaucer onwards we constantly meet with verses of less than the normal number of syllables.

Twénty bóokes clád in bláck and réed. (CHAUCER.)

<sup>1</sup> But see Ch. X, § 4. The boldest supporter of elision will hardly claim it in cases like 'the pill|ar of his throat|'.

Pull off my boots; harder, harder, so. (SHAKESPEARE.)  
 Stáy! the kíng hath thrówn his wárdér dówn. (SHAKESPEARE.)  
 Háste thee nýmph, and bríng with thee. (MILTON.)  
 Kníght and páge and hóusehold squíre (SCOTT.)  
 Thy bróther Déath cáme and críed. (SHELLEY.)  
 Brówsed by nóne but Dían's fáwns. (KEATS.)  
 Bréak! bréak! bréak!  
 On thy cóld gray stónes, O sêa. (TENNYSON.)

Obviously in such truncated lines there must be feet with only one syllable.

§ 2. In any system of metre based on the temporal equality of feet such monosyllabic feet are quite admissible if their duration is equal to that of the adjacent feet. The possibility of this depends on the element of pause. In Shelley's line

Thy bróthér Déath |  $\wedge$  cáme | and críed

which corresponds in rhythm with

When Í | aróse | and sáw | the dáwn

if full value is given to the rhythm, there must be a pause between *death* and *came*. So also in

Who nów |  $\wedge$  kéepe  
 That cálm |  $\wedge$  sléepe; (Shelley, *Hellas*.)

That strétches and swíngs to the slów  $\wedge$  pássionate púlse of the sêa  
 (Swinburne, *Hesperia*.)

and in

Their shóts álóng the déepe  $\wedge$  slówly bóóm  
 (Campbell, *Battle of the Baltic*.)

§ 3. Not only is this pause necessary for the maintenance of the rhythm, but it arises naturally out of phonetic conditions. There is even in prose, when the accent is *fully* marked, a natural and inevitable tendency to make a distinct pause between two heavily stressed syllables in immediate succession if equal weight is given to both.<sup>1</sup> In fact an unstressed syllable may be interposed without lengthening the duration of the whole, e.g. a *góld táble*, a *gólden táble*; or even two syllables, e.g. a *shárp táck*, a *shárper táck*, a *shárper attáck*. Similarly in the examples above, light syllables like *do* or

<sup>1</sup> There are of course many cases where one of two stressed contiguous syllables gives way before the other, whether owing to the metrical stress given by position or for some other reason. Contrast a *bláck*  $\wedge$  *bird was fýing róund* and a *bláckbird cáme and settled dówn*.

Who n<sup>o</sup>w do k<sup>ee</sup>p  
That c<sup>al</sup>mer sl<sup>ee</sup>p

<sup>1</sup> Professor Saintsbury declares boldly that he can accent two adjoining syllables without making a pause between them (*Hist. of Eng. Prosody*, iii. 281). It is, however, not natural to do so; and if he can, it is probably because he makes one stress distinctly stronger than the other, or pauses on the syllable instead of *after* it. In any case verse, except in unusual circumstances, will utilize rather than resist the natural tendencies of speech. Patmore, on the other hand, says that 'the pauses between adjacent accents' (which he calls 'metrical pauses') are 'of much greater duration than is given to most of the "stops"'.

duration of this pause, combined with that of the arsis, gives the foot its required length. Such a pause, where a period of silence fills up part of the time of a foot, may be called a *Compensatory Pause*. The function of this compensatory pause is not to mark divisions in the rhythmical movement, but its duration forms an integral part of a rhythmical period, and it plays an important part in maintaining that temporal regularity which makes the rhythm. The chief function of the logical and metrical pauses, on the other hand, is to mark off the divisions in the sense and the verse-units; they need not, and usually do not, fill the time of part of the foot.

§ 5. The sense-pause *may*, however, play a part in the periodic scheme, so that one and the same pause sometimes combines both characteristics and fulfils both functions: it is at once both suspensory and compensatory.

In fact monosyllabic feet occur most frequently where there is a pause for other reasons, and it is in these cases that monosyllabic substitution is most smoothly and satisfactorily made. In Tennyson's line

Break ! break ! break !

which corresponds in time-length with

On thy cöld | gray stōnes, | O sēa

the words are separated by rhetorical pauses. In Lear's request

Pull off | my bōots ; | √ hārd|er, hārd|er, sō.

there is obviously a heavy pause after *boots* marking the end of the sentence. In Milton's

√ Hāste thee nŷmph, and bring with thee  
√ Jēst and yōuthful jōllitŷ

between *thee* and *jest* there is the final metrical pause as well as the pause which separates two stressed syllables. Similarly with

Brōwsed by | nōne but | Dŷan's | fāwns √.

And so in such a line as this from Wordsworth's *Nutting*,

The bānq|uet ; √ òr | benēath | the trēes | I sāt

there is little doubt that the grammatical pause after *banquet* helps to fill out the time of a period which contains only two light sounds.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The observation of these pauses frequently removes doubt as to the division into feet. Four of the beats are unmistakable in the line

If trūe | here òn|ly, and of delīcious tāste,



In these lines, too, if we replace the pauses by sounds the durations of the feet and of the line remain the same, although of course the rhythmical effect is modified; e. g.

Be it lŏve, | ˘ lĭght | ˘ hărmŏnŷ  
Be it lŏve | or lĭght | or hărmŏnŷ

(Shelley, *Eug. Hills*, 133.)

It is rarely that a syllable so light as *and* forms a monosyllabic foot, as in

O'ercŏme | you with | her shŏw, | ˘ and | in tĭme

(Shakespeare, *Cymb.* v. v. 54.)

Such cases are usually the result of carelessness.

The omission of the first thesis in lines of the four-foot iambic scheme often gives a trochaic lilt to the line, as in Milton's *L' Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*:

Tŏwred cĭties plēase us thēn  
Dāncing in the chēquer'd shāde  
Ēnding òn the rŭssling lēaves  
Sŏftly òn my ēye-lids lāid  
Stŏoping thrŭgh a flēecy clŏud

But quite the same effect is not felt in many others:

Thēre | let Hŷ|men ŏft | appēar  
Rŏb'd | in flāmes | and ām|ber lĭght  
Mĭrth, | with thēe | I mēan | to lĭve  
Blāck, | but sŭch | as in | estēem

and hardly even when there is a feminine ending:

Strēit | mine ēye | hath cāught | new plēas(ures

although the following line does suggest the trochaic cadence:

Whĭlst the Lāntskip rŏund it mēasures

But in similar lines of five feet this movement is rarely maintained to the end. For instance, the following lines from Chaucer's *Prologue* recover their balance almost immediately after the opening, and fall into the normal cadence:

Twēnty bŏokēs clād | in blāk | and rēd.  
Gŷnglen in | a whĭst|lynge wĭnd | als clēere

Lines like the famous

Never, never, never, never, never.

of *Lear* are of course abnormal.

but does the remaining division fall after *and* or *of*? Probably after *and*, because the duration of the two light syllables *-ly* and *and* may well be eked out by that of the pause. Otherwise why not | *-ly and of* |?

§ 6. The principle of the convertibility of silence and sound is freely recognized in music, where 'rests', or intervals of silence counting in the time of the bar (to be distinguished from a musical 'pause'), are exceedingly frequent; and, especially if it is borne in mind that music and poetry have some community of origin, no *a priori* objection can be raised against its application in prosody. And in practice it gives an adequate explanation of phenomena for which no other explanation has been found adequate. If it were not so we should have to say, contrary to the evidence of the ear, that many lines of verse which are aesthetically quite satisfying are unrhythmical and bad.

§ 7. Monosyllabic feet, therefore, may be explained by the acceptance of equivalent periods of silence in the place of syllables in the thesis. It is also possible, however, that the time of the thesis may be partly, or even wholly, made up by the lengthening of an arsis. In Herrick's famous song of *Cherrie-Ripe*

If so be, you ask me where  
They doe grow? I answer, There . . .  
Whose Plantations fully shew  
All the yeere, where cherries grow.

words like *where* and *show* are easily given the time-value of a whole foot. In the musical setting by C. E. Horn *where* and *show* are represented by two crotchets, and no rest is used to make up the bar, although in the other two lines *there* and *grow* have the value of a crotchet and a half, and the bar is made up by a quaver rest :

[illegible]

Similarly in

Sin' áuld lǎng sýne

which corresponds to the scheme of

And nēver brōught to mīn'

the prolongation of sound is much more important than pause in filling up the foot. The musical setting gives no rests, and only so much pause is taken by the singer from the time of the word as is necessary for purposes of breathing.

Songs from Moore's *Irish Melodies* supply numerous examples of single disyllabic words of which the first (fully stressed) syllable is held on long enough for an accent (usually lighter or subordinate) to be given to the second.

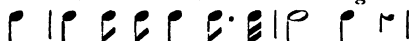
The chéerful héarts now brókèn



For her héart in his gráve is lýng



Was sèt in the crówn of a strángèr



Other examples show a clearer necessity and perhaps stronger accents :

For Jésus Chríst our Sáviour

which corresponds with

God rést you mérry gèntlemén.

and

Síng a sóng of síxpénce

The quéén was ín her párlòur

which correspond with

Now wás not thís a daínty dísh

The kíng was ín his còunting hóuse

This occurs only at the end of a line or metrical section, where pause is available to eke out the time. One has to notice also that here, as often, a major and a minor rhythm can be distinguished : the major rhythm gives two strong beats, the minor two additional beats, not quite so strong.

God rést you merry gèntlemen

God rést you mèrry gèntlemén

The kíng was in his còunting house

The kíng was ín his còunting hóuse

So that the difference in degree between the accents makes their collocation easier even when the verses are spoken and not sung, and probably would have done so even if the first of the two successive syllables were not drawn out by the voice dwelling on it.

Most examples of this compensatory lengthening will be found in song verse or lyric poetry, where (for reasons to be explained in a later chapter) conditions make it easy to pause *on* rather than *between* sounds ; in epic or dramatic verse, which is nearer to ordinary speech, syllables are not lengthened so much beyond their normal prose values, nor is the necessity so frequent. In other words, monosyllabic feet are, in speech verse, to be explained as

much by compensatory pause as by lengthening. Nevertheless, poets have recognized that this compensatory lengthening does occur; Clough, for instance, repeated some of his own lines (from the *Bothie*) 'to show how a verse might be read so that one syllable should take up the time of two, or conversely two of one.'

§ 8. The question as to whether the same syllable can be longer at one time than at another has been hotly disputed; but it is a mistake to consider that syllables in English have fixed quantities in the sense in which these were assigned to syllables in Latin verse, or rather that English vowels have conventional quantities which are necessarily a key to the duration of syllables as they occur in verse. The syllable *fat* with a so-called short vowel may take just as long to pronounce as *fate* with a so-called long vowel; although of course *fate* is more capable of being prolonged. Furthermore, the same syllables under different conditions need not have the same weight nor occupy the same length of time. This is undeniable for song, but hardly less so for narrative verse. In the following lines from Scott,

And *he* cálled | on the Spirit of the Fell.  
Men said, | *he* chänged | his mortal frame,  
But *Hē*, | the Chieftain of them all,

the word *he* has obviously a different duration in each verse: without pressing the exact proportions one might fairly represent the values as, respectively,  $\text{■}$  (or  $\text{■}^\bullet$ ),  $\text{■}$ , and  $\text{■}$ ; the whole feet being  $\text{■} \text{■} \text{■}$  (or  $\text{■}^\bullet \text{■}^\bullet \text{■}^\bullet$ ),  $\text{■} \text{■}$ , and  $\text{■} \text{■}$ . Again, in

*Through* Sölway sands, *through* Tárass móss,  
Löiter'd *through* the löfty häll,

the voice obviously dwells longer on *through* in the second line than in the first.

In ordinary speech the comparative lengths of syllables depend on general usage; some words like *broach* are normally long, others like *at* or *up* are normally short. But these normal durations are often modified by emotional or rhetorical considerations, and according to the different combinations into which the syllables enter. For verse syllables have no constant and absolutely fixed lengths; but on the other hand their duration frequently depends on their place in the rhythmical sequence.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'In English we lengthen or shorten syllables without scruple in order to make the feet of the requisite length' (Sweet, *Hist. of Eng. Sounds*, § 356).

§ 9. Occasionally a monosyllabic foot results from the use of a compensatory pause in the place of the arsis, as in

That shē did gīve | me, △ | whose pōssy wās (*Merch. of Ven.* v. i. 148.)

Than the sōft ∧ mýr|tle, △ | but mán, proud mán !  
(*Meas. for M.* II. ii. 117.)

The thesis of the following foot is also dropped in

Would thēn be nōth|ing : △ | √ trūths would be tāles,  
(*Ant. and C.* II. ii. 137.)

The regular beat of previous lines has set up an expectation of continued recurrence, and where the beat is expected and does *not* fall, there is a tendency to supply it in imagination, so that the ideal rhythm is maintained.<sup>1</sup> The fact that these lines, naturally delivered with a suitable pause, are satisfactory to the ear or auditory imagination is a strong confirmation of the temporal basis of poetic rhythm. It is to be noticed that the examples occur where there is already a sense-pause called for or facilitated by the grammatical arrangement. Non-dramatic verse, perhaps, provides a clearer example :

Fresh sprīng, and sūm|mer, △ | and wīnter hōar (Shelley, *Threnos.*)

for in drama 'a syllable or foot may be supplied by a gesture, as beckoning, a movement of the head to listen, or of the hand to demand attention' (Abbott, *Shakesperian Grammar*, § 506), or in fact by any interruption or marked change of thought or of speaker which causes a pause.

And fālls on th' ōth|er. △ (*Enter Lady Macbeth.*) | How nōw, what nēws ?  
(*Macb.* I. vii. 28.)

Haply you shall not see me more ; or if,  
A māngled shād|ow. △ | Perchānce to-mōrrow (*Ant. and C.* IV. ii. 26-7.)

§ 10. There are also examples of a whole foot having to be supplied in this way :

Against their wīll. | [*Stops to look.*] | But whō comes hēre ?  
(*Rich.* II. III. iii. 19.)

He's ta'en : | [*Shout.*] | and hārk ! | they shōut | for jōy  
(*J. Caes.* v. iii. 32.)

Must gīve us paūse. | [*Pause for reflection.*] | √ Thēre's | the respect  
(*Hamlet*, III. i. 68.)

One hesitates to quote Professor Saintsbury's opinion that 'it is easy to make a "long" syllable out of one that takes a very short time to pronounce', for he will not state definitely what he means by 'long'.

<sup>1</sup> On the subjective beat cf. Ch. II, § 6.

There is no way in which Shakespeare could have given greater emphasis to the sudden check which Hamlet's thoughts on the uncertainty of the beyond must have given to his words.

Also when there is a marked pause arising from emotion or from strong antithesis the whole foot may be a period of silence :

O disloyal thing,  
That should'st repair my youth, ¶ — ^ | thou heap'st  
A year's age on me. (Cymb. I. i. 131-3.)

Scarce any joy  
Did ever so long live; ¶ — ^ | no sorrow  
But killed itself much sooner. (Wint. Tale, v. iii. 51-3.)

§ II. The numerous instances of a break due to change of speaker should perhaps hardly be quoted. See *Macb.* I. ii. 7 and

Sic. Without | assis|tance △. ¶  
Men. I think | not so. (Coriol. IV. vi. 33.)

But the existence of so many other lines in which the absence of an ictus syllable is undeniable should encourage the recognition of the same phenomenon in lines like *Par. Lost*, vi. 912 :

Yet féll. | Remém|ber, △ | and féar | to transgréss  
which would have the same spacing if the pause were filled

Yet féll. | Remém|ber this, | and féar | to transgréss  
although *remember* would lose much of its emphasis.

In Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*, l. 331, it is better to let an imaginary beat fall during the pause after *Iran* :

and come  
To Ír|an, △ ¶ and bé | as my sôn | to mé  
than to impose stresses on *and* and *as* :

To Ír|an, and | be às | my sôn | to mé  
Lines like *Cymbeline*, I. v. 28 :

Will I first work : ¶ ^ hē's | for his mās|ter △,  
where the final arsis is blank, are of course extremely exceptional.

'Fear, dear, fire, hour . . . and other monosyllables ending in -r or -re, preceded by a long vowel or diphthong, are frequently pronounced as disyllables. Thus "fire" was often spelt and is still vulgarly pronounced "fier".' This statement by Abbott is one of great interest ; but his ideas of the supposed necessities of the metre lead him into several absurd scansion, such as

Lóath to | bid fá|rewéll, | we táke | our léaves  
which should be :

^ Lóath | to bíd | fárewéll, |

and

Why thén | I wí|ll. Fá|rewéll, | old Gaúnt

instead of :

Why thén | I wíll. ∩ — ^ | Fárewéll, | óld Gaúnt

or possibly :

Why then | I wíll. ∩ ∪ Fá|rewéll, | óld Gaúnt

[The *I will* is spoken with decision, not lingeringly. In this case, though not in the former, the *farewell* might be lengthened out.]  
and

Hear, Ná|ture, hé|ar, dé|ar Gód|dess; héar

which would be improved by scanning either

∪ Héar, ∩ ∪ Ná|ture, héar, ∩ déar Gód|dess, ∩ héar

with the emphasis and pauses at the opening, or even

Héar, ∩ Ná|ture, héar, ∩ — ^ | déar Gód|dess, ∩ héar

with a medial pause equivalent to a whole foot. It is not impossible that this last scansion might be modified by making the second *hear* extend into the third foot; but the emotion is best expressed by a broken rhythm.

Some other scansions will show that these words need not be treated as disyllabic :

^ Díed | every dáy | she lív'd. ∩ ^ Fáre | thee wéll.

Towards Cá|lais; ^ ∩ now gránt | him thére, ∩ thére séen

As dóne: ∩ ∪ pér|sevé|rance, déar | my lórd

For the two latter Abbott's scansions are fearful and wonderful :

Towards Cálais; | now gránt | him thé|re, the|re séen

As done: | persév|erance | déar | my lórd.

But it must be admitted that in

A shíp | you sént | me fór | to lí|re wáftage

such a disyllabic pronunciation keeps the line smoother, unless it can be shown that *waftage* was accented on the second syllable; and in

And with my sword ^ I'll keep | this dð|or sáfe

a harsh compensatory pause is softened by carrying on the later sounds of the previous word.

It may well be contended that these syllables are merely drawn out without being actually made into two syllables, and in some cases it certainly is so; but for metrical purposes it is hardly necessary to distinguish between the two cases.

So too in several examples quoted by Schipper :

An óld tḗmple there stánds, whereás some time  
And thóu, Fáther, receíve intò thy hánds (SURREY.)  
Júst as you léft them ; áll prisoners, sír (Shakespeare, *Temp.* v. i. 9.)  
My ówn lóve, my ónly déar (MOORE.)

there may well be a tendency in actual enunciation to carry on the resonant syllables, *old, thou, all, own*, into the period of time occupied by the next foot, so filling up part, but not the whole, of the intervening pause. Experiments show that the actual points of stress must be near the beginning of the stressed word, at most no later than the beginning of the vowel sound, and therefore go far to justify the assumption of this lingering movement. Such a treatment certainly lessens the jerkiness of lines of this kind. (On this subject see further, Ch. VII, Addendum II.)

§ 12. In this chapter must also be placed examples of the dropping of syllables, one or two, from trisyllabic feet.

Táke her up | 'instantly,  
Lóving, not | *lòathing*  $\wedge$ .  
P'icture it, | thínk of it  
Dissolute | *mán!*  $\wedge$   $\wedge$  (Hood, *The Bridge of Sighs*.)

Compare

But we stéad|fastly gázed | on the fáce | that was déad

with

Not a sól|dier dischárged | *his fúre|well shòt*

and with

$\wedge$  F'ew | *and shòrt* | were the práyers we sáid  
(Wolfe, *Sir J. Moore*.)

The first-quoted line from Wolfe shows that the base is trisyllabic ; but often, in modern poets like Swinburne who have recognized the principle of equivalence, it is not very easy to decide what is the base-foot of such verse, for neither trisyllabic nor disyllabic feet are markedly predominant. The ictus, however, is always well marked, and there is no doubt as to the rhythmical movement. Time, and not number of syllables, is of course the basis ; and the nomenclature is not of first importance.

#### ADDENDUM

The principle of compensatory pauses as possible equivalents for missing syllables was decisively stated by Patmore in 1857, unfortunately with some unwarrantable extensions. He pointed out that Joshua Steele in 1779 had recognized the isochronous basis of metre, and 'the strong pause which is required for the



proper delivery of adjacent accented syllables, and without which the most beautiful verses must often be read as harsh prose'. Lanier in 1881 insisted that 'rests' or silences between sounds 'are quite as necessary to many forms of verse as are the sounds thereof'. A most convincing exposition is given by Mr. T. S. Omond, who points out that

Now was	not this	a dainty dish	to	set	before	a king?
By	came	a blackbird,	and	nipt	off	her nose.

are 'of the same pattern, the same *metre* . . . because the periods in each are identical, though in one case less fully filled up by syllables' (*Study of Metre*, pp. 5-6). His statement that these two lines 'produce the same metrical effect' is probably an oversight. The two are equivalent and represent the same scheme, but the *movement*, the rhythmical *effect*, is not the same, because the filling in is different.

Professor Saintsbury recognizes the equivalence of silence in theory, although he makes too little use of it in his actual practice of scansion. English, he says, possesses a property unknown to the classical languages,<sup>1</sup> 'that of accepting . . . *silence* for *sound*, the pause, half-foot or even foot, as a recognized expletive of the line. By this licence . . . it possesses *monosyllabic* feet' (*Hist.* iii. 522). These, however, are 'practically not found except

*a*, In the first place of a line.

*b*, In the last place of it.

*c*, At a strong caesura or break, it being almost invariably necessary that the voice should rest on it long enough to supply the missing companion to make up the equivalent of a "time and a half" at least.

*d*, In very exceptional cases where the same trick of the voice is used apart from strict caesura' (*Hist.* i. 83).

The first two cases refer to catalectic verses, but *a* refers only to those in rising rhythm (iambic or anapaestic), and *b* to falling rhythm (trochaic or dactylic). The last case apparently contemplates the compensatory pause, which, however, is not 'very exceptional'. It is also highly unsatisfactory to reduce it to a mere 'trick of the voice', as if verse-rhythm were no better than an affair of juggling with feet or syllables; and in any case it is not the same 'trick' as that of *c*, which refers to the internal logical or metrical pause.

<sup>1</sup> He has evidently forgotten the 'half-foot' in the so-called pentameter of elegiacs.

## VII

### COMBINED SUBSTITUTION AND THE CONDITIONS OF EQUIVALENCE

§ 1. IN the two preceding chapters on trisyllabic and monosyllabic substitution, the illustrations were confined to examples where only one or other of these kinds occurs in isolation. Since the number of syllables in the line is either larger or smaller than the normal, no doubt can be cast on the existence of such feet. But there is no *a priori* reason why *both* kinds should not occur in combination in one and the same line. It is in fact in combination that the two kinds of substitution are found most frequently. This however, has unfortunately been obscured by the fact that the two kinds of equivalence balance each other syllabically and the total number of syllables in the line remains normal.

(a) Monosyllabic + trisyllabic :

^ Rúled | in this ísle | and éver wáging wár  
^ Eách | upon óth|er, wásted áll the lánd. (*Coming of Arthur*, 6-7.  
His sílver skín, | ^ lácéd | with his gól|den blóod. (*Macbeth*, II. iii. 94.  
And blúe | ^ spúrt | of a líght|ed máttch.  
(Browning, *Meeting at Night*.)

(b) Trisyllabic + monosyllabic :

You are not worth the dúst | which the rúde | ^ wínd  
^ Blóws | in your fáce | (Lear, IV. ii. 30.  
At my bóy's | ^ yéars, | the cóurage óf a mán.  
(*Sohrab and Rustum*, 45.  
How déar|ly they dó't! | ^ 'Tis | her bréathing thát  
(*Cymbeline*, II. ii. 18.)

Double combined substitution is also common, the number of syllables still remaining normal :

^ Léans | her unp|ll|owed héad | ^ fráught | with sad féars.  
(*Comus*, 355.  
Lóoks | in the clóuds, | ^ scórn|ing the báse | degrées  
(*Caesar*, II. i. 26.  
And the sóft | ^ wíngs | of péace | ^ ców|er him róund | (COWLEY.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This last excellent line was considered by Johnson 'remarkably in-harmonious'. But for him verse was only pure 'when the accent rests upon every second syllable through the whole line', and this formed 'the most complete harmony of which a single verse is capable'! This opinion (in the

Here, again, pause plays a part in filling up the periodic scheme :

For the gáý | ^ béams | of líghtsome dáy  
 ^ Gíld | but to flóut | the rúins gráy (Scott, *Lay*, II, 3-4.)

In the first line it is a purely compensatory pause ; in the second the metrical pause also is utilized.

§ 2. These scansiones are not in accordance with the system of the orthodox metrists of the last few decades ; they would divide the lines thus—

(α) His sílver skín, | láced with | his gólden blóod  
 (β) How déar|ly they | dó't ! 'Tís | her breathing that<sup>1</sup>

explaining in (α) that a trochee is put instead of the normal iamb (trochaic substitution), in (β) that instead of two iambs we have a pyrrhic and a spondee.

This method of explanation seems to be accepted by Professor Saintsbury, whose view is that English verse arranges itself in 'certain equivalent groups of syllables'—iamb, trochee, spondee, anapaest, dactyl, and tribrach ; and that all these feet 'are constructively equivalent, and (subject to further limitations of construction) as interchangeable—capable of substitution'. On the next page, however, he admits that 'while there is a general equivalence, there is by no means an indiscriminate capacity for substitution', and notices in particular that 'a dactyl before an iamb or an anapaest after a trochee is always cacophonous'. To the principle of isochronism he has no particular objection, but prefers 'a term expressing "equality and congruity to the ear", and would be liberal on the first score . . . and pretty strict on the latter, though with a strictness very hard to define' (*Hist.* iii. 522-3). This is just the trouble : his strictness is extremely 'hard to define'. His criterion 'equality and congruity to the ear' is admirable ; as he says in the later *Manual* (p. 22), 'the best verse admits of large substitution of feet of different syllabic length, provided—(1) that these are equal or nearly equal in prosodic value to those for which

*Rambler*, No. 86) illustrates the danger of judging verse according to its conformity to a rigid preconceived scheme instead of attending to the music which arises naturally out of the lines themselves.

<sup>1</sup> e.g. two lines from *Hamlet* are thus scanned in J. B. Mayor, *Chapters on English Metre*, pp. 194-5, also in his later *Handbook*, pp. 11, 13 :

Nay, ans|wer me | : stand, and | unfold | yourself (I. i. 2.)

I do | not set | my life | at a | pin's fee (I. iv. 65.)  
 I o I o I o o 2 I

they are substituted; (2) that the substituted feet go rhythmically well with those next to which they are placed'. But he never explains the conditions of this 'congruity' and going 'rhythmically well'. He does not in theory take exception to trochaic substitution, and in practice certainly accepts it, as the following scansions show:

*Black is | the beau|ty of | the bright|est day*  
*Singe my | white head! | And thou, | all shak|ing thunder*  
*Time mādē | thee what | thou wast, | kīng of | the woods*  
 (Manual, pp. 64, 67, 89.)

Although later (p. 111) a line from Tennyson's *Dying Swan* is scanned

*Sōme|times āfār, | ānd sōme|times ānēār;*

as it ought to be; while in another line he seems willing to accept combined monosyllabic and trisyllabic substitution instead of trochaic; thus—

*Chás|ing itself | at its ówn | wild will.*

§ 3. Now, are trochees and iambs 'congruous' in the same line? Do they 'go rhythmically well' together? A trochee is a unit from another kind of rhythm, viz. falling rhythm, and is not fitted by nature to appear in a line in rising rhythm. If we represent the arsis by  $\alpha$  and the thesis—no matter whether consisting of one syllable, or two, or of a period of silence—by  $\theta$ , the formula of a line in rising rhythm would be

$\theta \alpha | \theta \alpha | \theta \alpha | \theta \alpha | \theta \alpha$

Here each ictus or beat occurs at a regular interval. The Mayorian scansion

*His síl|ver skín, | láced with | his gól|den blóod*  
 would give

$\theta \alpha | \theta \alpha | \alpha \theta | \theta \alpha | \theta \alpha$

where the beats do not occur at regular intervals. Obviously to place the beat at the beginning of a period when all the other beats fall at the end is to break the rhythm, for the beats cannot then be at regular intervals of time. We must therefore say that the line is broken in rhythm, or that the scansion does not represent the rhythm and is wrong. To no good ear, which observes the pause after *skin*, will the line appear unrhythmical; we must agree, therefore, that the scansion which ignores the pause and the temporal

spacing is false: The scheme for this line is still

$$\theta a | \theta a | \theta a | \theta a | \theta a$$

the third thesis being a silent interval, and the fourth thesis two light syllables, and the duration of all the feet being equal. Transposed into Latham's syllabic notation, the formula would not be

$$x a | x a | a x | x a | x a$$

but

$$x a | x a | \wedge a | x x a | x a$$

i. e.

His sĭl|ver skĭn, || ∞ lăced | with hĭs gŏl|den blŏod

Feet which are equivalent for the purposes of substitution in any given metrical scheme must be not only equal in duration, but congruent. To go rhythmically well with the remaining feet of the line, the order of the syllables, the relative positions of thesis and arsis, must not be reversed. A trochee ( $a x$ ) cannot replace an iamb ( $x a$ ). Iambs and anapaests ( $x a$  and  $x x a$ ) are interchangeable; so are trochees and dactyls ( $a x$  and  $a x x$ ) in non-quantitative verse.

√ § 4. Professor Mayor declares in connexion with the line

Me, me only, just object of his ire

that 'scansion by feet will not of itself tell us how to read the line'. Apparently, therefore, we may scan in one way and read in another, and the ear is to be no judge whatever. But unless scansion represents the rhythm of a verse, of what use is it? Poe dealt with this question very sanely: 'The object of what we call *scansion* is the distinct marking of the rhythmical flow. . . . There *can* be no other object, and there is none. Of course, then, the scansion and the reading flow should go hand in hand. . . . The former represents and expresses the latter, and is good or bad as it truly or falsely represents and expresses it. If by the written scansion of a line we are not enabled to perceive any rhythm or music in the line, then either the line is unrhythmical or the scansion false' (*Rationale of Verse*, p. 255).

§ 5. It was apparently these fictitious scansions that made J. A. Symonds declare: 'The one sound rule to be given to the readers of dramatic blank verse, written by a master of the art, is this: Attend strictly to the sense and to the pauses; the lines will then be perfectly melodious; but if you attempt to scan the lines

on any preconceived metrical system, you will violate the sense and vitiate the music.'<sup>1</sup>

His declaration may be a little exaggerated, and applies, of course, primarily to dramatic blank verse, but he felt that 'the movement of the sense invariably controlled the rhythm of the verse'; and when he speaks of 'the spasms of intense emotion which have to be imagined in order to give its metrical value' to the last quoted verse, and shows that 'its intention is understood as soon as we allow the time of two whole syllables to the first emphatic *me*, and bring over the next words, *me only*, in the time of another two syllables, by doing which we give dramatic energy to the utterance', he is enabling successors to give a truer scansion<sup>2</sup> than that of his critic Professor Mayor, which is

Mé, mé | ónly, | júst ób|ject of | his íre

'First spondee, second trochee, third spondee, fourth pyrrhic, fifth iamb.' *a a | a x | a a | x x | x a.*

The ictus once at the beginning of a foot, once at the end, sometimes apparently either or both, once none at all; in fact, no regularity but that of two syllables to a foot!

§ 6. If Professor Mayor had remembered Symonds's warning and attended to the sense and the pauses, he might have seen that his scansion of *Par. Lost*, iii. 378 (*M. E. M.*, p. 10),

The full | blaze of | thy beams, | and through | a cloud  
<sub>o        1                2        o</sub>

does not give the same opportunity for the words *full* and *blaze* to swell, as it were, in accordance with the idea as there would be if the pause between the two were noted:

The füll | ^ bláze | of thy béams, | and thróugh | a clóud

In another line, too (*Hamlet*, i. i. 2), it is obvious that 'the sense controls the rhythm'.

Nay, án|swer mé: || ^ stáñd, | and unfóld | yoursélf

Nothing could be more natural than that the pause after the

<sup>1</sup> Symonds, of course, apparently unacquainted with Patmore's essay, was thinking of the orthodox scansion, derived mainly from Johnson, of his own day. Many of his remarks suggest that he would have been in substantial agreement with Patmore's main principles.

<sup>2</sup> ^ Mē, | me ón(ly, || júst ób|ject of | his íre

The actual scansion will depend on the possibility of a light hypermetrical syllable in the strong pause before *just*. In the heavy third foot the stress is nearly level, but the metrical ictus must fall on *ob-*, as also on *of* in the light fourth foot. The whole rhythmical movement makes this indubitable.

emphatic *me* should give further emphasis both to *me* and to the emphatic *stand*.<sup>1</sup> The voice passes rapidly over the light syllables *and un-*, so that the duration of all the feet is regular. Similarly in *Par. Lost*, i. 589-91,

He above the rest  
In shape and gesture proudly eminent  
^ Stōbd | like a tōwr |

where Mayor (*Handbook*, p. 106) scans

Stood like | a tower  
                  2       0       0       2

how obviously the picture of Satan standing out above all is intensified by the word standing alone. Compare also i. 194-5,

his other parts besides  
^ Prŕne | on the flōd |

In these lines the scansion by substituted trochees (*x a* | *a x* | *x a* | *x a* | *x a*) does not represent the real movement of the lines; and if it did the lines would be unrhythmical, since the beats would in that case be not even roughly periodic, whereas in actual fact the rhythm is quite satisfying.

As against Mayor's scansion of the first line of *Paradise Lost* (*Handbook*, pp. 10 and 16)

Of man's | first dis|obe|dience, and | the fruit  
          0       2       2       1   0 2   0 0   0

I quote Clough's conception of the rhythm: 'The two feet "first disobe—" took up the time of four syllables, two iambic feet: the voice rested awhile on the word "first", then passed swiftly over "diso—", then rested again on "be—" so as to recover the previous hurry'; and accordingly would scan:

Of mán's | ^ f'first | disobe|dience, ¶ and | the frúit

or better still, allowing the fourth ictus to fall subjectively during the pause:

Of mán's | ^ f'first | disobe|dience, ¶ — ^ | and the frúit

Similarly the rhetorical pause naturally interposed in

To bē | or nót | to bē; | ^ thát | is the qüestion

leaves no doubt as to what scansion best represents the cadence of the line. Again, in

but the King stood out in heaven,  
^ Crŕwn'd. ¶¶ And Leód|ogran awōke. (*Coming of Arthur*, 442-3.)

<sup>1</sup> *Me* is of course emphatic because, as Franciscus was the sentry on guard, it was his business to challenge, and not the new-comer's. Mayor scans (*Chapters*, p. 194, and *Handbook*, p. 11):

Nay, answer me : | stand, and | unfold yourself

no one who realizes the emphasis on *crown'd* standing alone as a monosyllabic foot would be satisfied by the scansion

*Crówn'd. And | Leód|ogran*

Other examples of the monosyllabic foot helping to make 'the sound an echo to the sense' are:

And the fringe  
Of that great breaker, sweeping up the strand,  
^ Lashed | at the wíz|ard^ às he spáke the wórd.  
(*Coming of Arthur*, 385-7.)

his arms  
^ Clásh'd : || and the sóund | was goód in Gáreth's éar.  
(*Gareth and Lynette*.)

And Rustum answer'd not, but hurl'd  
His spéar : || ^ dŏwn | from the shóulder, dŏwn it cáme.  
(*Sohrab and Rustum*, 398-9.)

§ 7. There is no danger that this method of explanation will cover the deficiencies of bad and unrhymical verse. The lines above quoted are good because the rhythm is preserved by natural pauses—pauses which are not only justifiable but essential. Bad lines are bad because, firstly, they cause perplexity, and, secondly, on closer analysis they can be made to scan, if at all, only by putting in unnatural pauses which are not essential and not justifiable, or by putting stresses on syllables that will not bear them. The arrangement of speech-sound is not such that its centroids of effect are felt to occur at regular intervals. Only a temporary lapse of the rhythmical sense could have produced such lines as Matthew Arnold's

Because thou hast shamed me before both the hosts  
To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee.  
or Wyatt's

She that me learns to love, and to suffer  
With this hardness takes displeasure.  
and no spacing out, however ingenious, will make them scan satisfactorily.

§ 8. The spondee of classical prosody was a foot of two long syllables, the pyrrhic was a combination of two short syllables. Now in English verse there are undoubtedly feet of two heavy syllables and of two light syllables:—

Say, muse, | their names | then known, | who first, | who last  
His min|isters | of ven|geance and | pursuit

The question can be satisfactorily and fully discussed only after an examination of stress and its functions, but in anticipation it may



be noticed that the existence of different degrees of stress and the tendency, where no conflicting force exerts itself, to place an ictus where it is expected (once the movement of rhythm has been set up) will usually distinguish one of the two syllables, e.g. the second in rising rhythm.

Sáy, múse, | their nămes | thén knówn, | whó fírst, | whó lăst  
His mǐn|istèrs | of vǝng|eance ànd | pursúit

There is no necessity for a uniform degree of stress ; it is sufficient if the arsis is (or is capable of being made) slightly heavier than the thesis. It is probably better to call these simply cases of light or heavy feet, so as to avoid possible misleading implications of the classical terms.<sup>1</sup>

In such lines, however, as

I d'ó not s'et my lífe | at a pín's | ^ fée

Mayor's scansion by pyrrhic and spondee

I do not set my life | at a | pin's fee

cannot be accepted. Here, and more clearly still in

Affection? pŏoh! you spēak | like a grēen | ^ g'irl,  
(*Hamlet*, I. iii. 101.)

She dwélt | on a wíde | ^ móor. (WORDSWORTH.)

there is a compensatory pause between the last two syllables which lends emphasis to both.

§ 9. Masson quotes some cases of 'dactylic substitution' from *Paradise Regained*:

From us his foes pronounced | *glory he* | exacts. (iii. 120.)

Mayor prefers 'glory | he exacts', keeping closer to the speech-groups, but marking the pause after *pronounc't* will give the true rhythm :

From ús his fœes pronõunc't | ^ glór|y he exácts.

the last foot containing four syllables, but syllables of such a nature, with such a remarkable absence of consonant sounds, that no difficulty is experienced. Similarly the line scanned by Masson as

Shook the | *arsenal*, | and fulmin'd over Greece, (P. R. iv. 270.)

<sup>1</sup> The term spondee, however, is not so inapplicable to English verse as some accentualists would think, for it represents much the same thing as in classical verse, viz. a foot of two long or heavy syllables, one of which is distinguished by receiving the metrical ictus. In neither system, therefore, are the two syllables equal in every respect. (There seems to be an increasing tendency to believe that stress, being of course quite independent of the *ῥόνοι* or fixed pitch-accents, must have been used to mark the ictus even in Greek verse.)

and misquoted and misdivided by Mayor as

Shook the ar|senal, | and thundered over Greece,  
might be scanned with the two light and liquid syllables *-enal*  
filling the caesural pause as hypermetrical :

^ Shóok | the árs(enal, ¶ and fúlmin'd över Gréece,  
So too in *P. R.* iv. 243 the second, third, and fourth syllables go  
quite smoothly together to form the thesis of a four-syllabled foot :

Cít|y or subúr|an, stúdios wálls and shádes  
(instead of Masson's '*Cít|y or | subúrban*'), although the balance of  
the line is rather unusual for Milton.

## ADDENDA

### I. INVERSION

The so-called 'trochaic substitution' is sometimes termed by accentualists 'inversion of stress'. Mr. Bridges, for instance, says: 'Blank verse is typically in rising rhythm. . . . But the rhythm is sometimes falling; i.e. the stress may be shifted on to the odd syllable in any place in the line. It is then described as inverted' (*Milton's Prosody*, p. 15). Translated into terms of the foot-system this means that for one of the normal feet of rising rhythm a foot of the type used in falling rhythm is substituted. But the substitution of one foot could not change the rhythm into falling rhythm. Rhythm involves continuity—'a flowing': the occurrence of two similar feet may set up a rhythm, which will be confirmed by a third, but, as Poe observed, 'in a line of one foot we can have no appreciation of Rhythm'. Even then if it were true that a trochee is substituted for an iamb, the term 'inverted rhythm' would not be correct. Again stress might be 'shifted', and a foot, or the order of its constituent parts (*arsis* and *thesis*), might conceivably be inverted, but this cannot accurately be called 'inversion of stress'.

### II. SYNCOPATION

When syncopation occurs in music, the rhythmic accent is theoretically on the latter part of a note that occupies parts of two bars,<sup>1</sup> but, since it is practically impossible to 'hold' the note so as to preserve its unity and yet give it this change of intensity, the

<sup>1</sup> The case of internal syncopation, where there are two accents to a bar, is analogous.

effect is to make the accent fall before its due time, up to which, however, it may be sustained. The older music represented this rather suggestively by writing the note exactly on the bar-line, as if cut through by it, though modern music uses the 'tie' or 'bind' to combine apparently separate notes. A similar process, without doubt, occurs frequently in the actual reading of English verse. Certain cases of combined substitution might be interpreted in this way with a sound extending from one foot to another, though in rising rhythm, of course, the direction of apparent displacement is reversed, and the accent lingers instead of being anticipated. It is not, however, actually displaced, so that the analogy is hardly complete.

Affection? pooh! you spēak like a grēen ^ gírl,

In this line, according as the necessary pause is made *after* or *on* the word *green*, the last two feet might be represented

| like a grēen | ^ gírl | or | like a grē'en gírl,

I do not mean that the poet deliberately intended this—what he does is to write a line that satisfies him as being rhythmical—but it is because poetry is susceptible of this adjustment and suggests it that custom cannot stale the infinite variety of its cadences.

This process, however, is rather more usefully applied to a set of words (v. *supra*, Ch. VI, § 11) sometimes explained as disyllabic.

And with my sword I'll kēep this dōor ^ safe

A shíp you, sēnt me fór to híre wáft(age).

This treatment, too, may make easier the reference to a 'hovering' or 'distributed' accent (v. Ch. VIII, § 12), in lines like

She that is clad | in complete steel |

Ordnained without redempt|ion, without end |

Cases of uncertainty, if not displacement, of accent may arise in lines which are perhaps best scanned with an 'ideal ictus' in one place (i.e. absence of arsis), e.g.

At Pán|demón|ium, ^ | the hígh cáp|ital

Of mán's | ^ first | disobēd|ience, ^ | and the frúit

but where, since the ictus will find a resting-place if it can, there is a tendency for the accent to be attracted, backward or forward, to the stronger of the two adjacent syllables.

At Pándemón|ium, ¶ the high cá|pitál  
Of mán's | fírst | dísobéd|ience, ¶ ànd | the frúit.

Another musical device which, without doubt, has its analogy in speech-verse is change of time-signature. In such a line as

Áy, | thou poor ghóst, | while mēmory hólds a séat .

the second foot is clearly longer than any other; it must be given the value of, say, four time-units instead of three. This, of course, constitutes a departure from strict periodicity, and is therefore only rarely admitted (so that the rhythmical time-scheme is in no danger of being disestablished), and then only when supported and demanded by the sense. Cf. also

O'er bog or steep, through straight, | róugh, dēse | or rare,  
With head, | hánds, wíngs | or feet pursues his way (*P. L.* ii. 948-9.)

where the slow, impeded progress of Satan is being described, and the *tempo* is reduced to conform to the poetic intention.

## VIII

### CONSTITUTION OF THE ICTUS—WEIGHT AND ACCENT

§ 1. We have seen that the rhythm of poetry is constituted by a series of speech-sounds, with their natural pauses, which form sections occupying successive intervals of time equal in length though often of varying syllabic content. Our perception of this rhythm is brought about mainly by the opening or close of each period being marked by a beat or ictus; and this beat, which is mental in origin, is usually materialized in a sound that is heavier or stronger than the others in the same period, or, as it is usually termed in connexion with English verse, a sound that is stressed or accented. The primordial material of rhythm must be capable of arrangement in equal sections or measures; and this periodic arrangement is marked out and made manifest normally by stress or accent.

§ 2. That there is an instinctive tendency to mark off equal intervals of time by emphasizing the regular recurrence of any phenomenon is shown not only by the way in which we find ourselves subconsciously beating time to music with finger or foot, but also by deliberate experiments with a series of uniform sounds, which were subjectively arranged into groups by emphasizing some of them. Ordinarily, however, this accentuation is materialized, and it is necessary now to inquire into the way in which the ictus shows itself externally. We have seen that sounds may be distinguished one from another by differences in four possible attributes; viz. stress, quantity, pitch, and tone-colour. The first three involve differences in degree; the last involves differences of quality. The character of the ictus may differ in different languages, and even in the same language it is possible that different elements may be utilized in combination; and for this reason it has sometimes seemed advisable to speak of 'weight' rather than 'accent' or 'stress', so long as it was not necessary to carry the analysis farther.<sup>1</sup> But tone-colour has never been used alone to mark ictus, and even in Old English alliteration was not the invariable concomitant of stress. On the other hand, it is indubitable that the beat may be sufficiently marked by stress without the help of any other element. There is a general tendency for the stressed syllable to be longer and also perhaps to be higher in tone than its accompanying unstressed syllables. But whether there is, or is not, any essential connexion between stress and quantity or pitch, it is generally accepted that the principal part in the marking of the beat in English verse is played by accent, stress, or emphasis. This is produced ordinarily by increased force or intensity of utterance, manifesting itself as loudness of tone.

§ 3. Accent or stress may be described from three different points of view:

(a) *Physical*. The Physical constitution of accent has been a subject of dispute, but it seems that three properties of tone may be involved: the pitch or height, the intensity or loudness, and the

<sup>1</sup> Professor Saintsbury uses the terms 'long' and 'short', while explicitly denying that they involve differences of quantity, i.e. of duration (*Hist. of Eng. Prosody*, iii. 520; *Manual*, 31-2); but nevertheless the terms do suggest actual length and shortness. On the other hand the terms 'weight', 'light', and 'heavy' would cover either length or stress or both. The average mental impression would usually be recognized by the name 'weight'.

duration. These depend respectively on the frequency of vibrations, their amplitude or breadth, and their continuance. Intensity is the essential and most important element of accent in Germanic languages.

(b) *Physiological*. Physiologically it involves a greater or less expenditure of muscular and nervous energy; the intensity of a sound depends on the pressure under which air is sent through the glottis.

(c) *Psychological*. From the Psychological or mental point of view there are two factors of accent: auditory and motor. 'The one property that characterizes auditory accent is "impressiveness"; this may arise from increase in loudness, but also from decrease, from rise in pitch, but also from fall, from lengthening of the duration, but also from diminution—in short from any *change* which produces a mental effect. Motor work may arise (1) from a longer time of work; (2) from greater effort, as in increasing the breath pressure, or as in intentionally decreasing it, or in increasing the tension of the vocal chords, or in stronger muscular movements of any of the other speech organs; (3) from increased complexity of effort as in less familiar sounds, &c.' (Scripture, *Experimental Phonetics*, p. 506).

For most of the purposes of prosody it is enough to say that accent is the emphasis, in whatever way materialized, which makes one syllable stand out in relief and gives it prominence over its neighbours. Commonly this emphasis is given by the increased force with which a syllable is pronounced, and to the hearer this manifests itself as loudness. But as Professor Scripture says, 'The term "accent" may profitably be restricted to its psychological meaning; an accented sound is thus one that impresses the hearer more strongly or that requires more mental effort on the part of the speaker'.

§ 4. It is obvious that all accented sounds are not accented in the same degree; some have greater weight and impressiveness than others. At the very least, three degrees of stress must be recognized; more profitably four:

- (i) absence of stress, or rather absence of emphasis;
- (ii) light, weak, or secondary stress;
- (iii) normal or full stress;
- (iv) heavy stress or strong accent.

The ear can certainly distinguish more than these; but perhaps this rough division will serve for the ordinary purposes of metrical analysis, at any rate if we add another degree,

(v) extra-heavy stress.<sup>1</sup>

Examples of light stresses are the final sounds of *cheerily*, *impressiveness*, or the first in *disentangle*. The different degrees may be indicated thus:

Immédiately the mōuntains hūge appēar;

a triple mark being used for extra-heavy stresses and a grave for weak stresses:

Mē, mé Ōnly, júst Ōbject òf his íre

Bóth túrned, and únder ōpen ský adŏred.

or, according to the method used by A. J. Ellis, by subscribed digits:

Me, me only, just object of his ire

4 2 4 0 2 4 0 1 0 3

§ 5. It is important for prosody to distinguish the different principles on which syllables or words are thus emphasized. Stress or accent may be classified according to its special functions, according as it gives prominence (i) to certain syllables in a particular word, (ii) to certain words in the sentence, or (iii) to certain sounds in the verse.

(i) *Word Accent* or *Etymological Accent*.

(a) *Native Words*. If we take words in isolation we find that the different syllables of a word are not all given equal emphasis, e. g. *alone*, *lonely*, *marking*, *remark*. Native English words and words of Romance origin do not, however, follow the same law. In words of Germanic origin the heaviest stress is in general found to fall on the most significant syllable, usually therefore in simple words on the root syllable, which is most frequently the first, and not on affixes or inflexional syllables; e. g. *fáther*, *héaven*, *góeth*, *óxen*, *máiden*, *mórrów*. In verbal compounds the primary accent falls usually on the verb-element, not on the particle prefixed; e. g. *abíde*, *aríse*, *becóme*, *begín*, *forgíve*. Cf. also such words as *afŏot*,

<sup>1</sup> Those who cannot understand stress to be equivalent to impressiveness or mental prominence will perhaps object that in the first case we must speak of emphasis, because strictly there can be no absence of stress unless there is also absence of sound; but for metrical purposes it is the *relative* degree of stress that is important: all that is necessary is that the weight of the thesis should be less than that of the arsis.

*afield, to-day*. In noun-compounds the primary stress falls upon the first element: *house-boat, kinsman, Tuesday, brimstone, freeman*; and this is so even when the first element is a prepositional or adverbial particle: *answer, foreword, forehead*; and so in general, *freely, sometimes, nowhere*.

In Old English there was a large number of compound words with secondary stress: *hygerðf, sigedūf, mōdiglic, hildelēoð, mēdo-lyrig*; but the loss of self-explaining compounds in Middle English has greatly diminished the number of these. *Aldermān, brōtherhōod, everyōne* (now commonly treated as two words), *fellowship* are some of the few that remain, together with adverbs like *lūstily, wōrthily*.

(β) *Romance Words*. In words of Romance origin the root syllable is no longer an approximate guide to the placing of stress; compare *dictator, dictatorial; connote, connotation; ridicule, ridiculous*. The tendency in French words is to place the primary stress as late as possible—the very opposite of the English tendency. The last syllable usually takes the accent unless it ends in weak *-e*, in which case the accent falls on the penultimate; or it might be better to say that the accent falls on the last syllable that has the quality of *sonorité* or a full vowel. Therefore in imported Romance words the accent at first was left in its original position, so that we frequently find in Middle English, particularly at the end of a line or at a caesura, such accentuations as *honōur, natūre, contrārie, contrée, vertū, prisōun, manēre, cilée*. But in many cases the native influence ultimately prevailed, and the accent receded to or towards the beginning of the word; in Chaucer we find alongside the other forms, *hōnour, cōntree, cītee, māner, vērtu, prisoun*. In verb-forms, however, the tendency to avoid stressing the prefixed particle in native compounds caused much less disturbance in the Romance accentuation. Thus the words *conduct, desert, present, ferment, accent, frequent*, are stressed on the second syllable when used as verbs, but on the first as nouns and adjectives. Sometimes for purposes of contrast a prefixed particle is stressed in words where ordinarily it would not be stressed; e. g. *to dénote, not to cōnnote; to bear and fōrbear; a rémade golf-ball*. But even to the middle of the sixteenth century this uncertainty of accent in borrowed words was used by poets to suit their own convenience. This wholesale overriding of the Romance accent has been due largely to the fact that accent in French has never been so strongly marked as in the Germanic languages. A Teuton at least would be inclined to agree with Sweet that 'in French the syllables are all pronounced



with a nearly uniform stress, the strong syllables rising only a little above the general level'.

In many words of three syllables or more there are two or even three stresses, one of these being a secondary accent and much lighter than the primary; e.g. *adversity*, *secondary*, *différence*, *indéterminée*. In some words like *empêrôr* Germanic influence has caused the primary and secondary accents to change places; they were originally *empeouroûr*.

(ii) Of *Sentence-stress* two kinds may be distinguished:

(a) The *Syntactical* or *Logical Accent* marks the relative logical or syntactical importance of the words in a sentence. In the absence of special conditions, then, the nouns and verbs representing the subject, predicate, and object or complement will be marked by stress, while conjunctions, prepositions, and articles usually remain unstressed. 'Desôe was considered the founder of the English nôvel.' This emphasis, however, is often qualified by

(β) the *Rhetorical Accent* (or Subjective Accent), which gives emphasis to a word expressing any idea which the speaker or writer wishes to make specially prominent. In the sentence 'You have burnt his books' the principal stress may vary its position according as the speaker wishes to emphasize the identity of the agent, the actuality of the occurrence, the ownership of the books, &c. By accenting *you* the person addressed is distinguished from others; 'it was *you*, not I, who burnt his books.' So the accentuation of *burnt* emphasizes the particular nature of the act of destruction. It is this rhetorical accent which gives additional emphasis to *am* and *streams* in

'Tis true I ām that spirit unfortunate

See where Christ's blood strēams in the firmament

So also in

Mē, me ōnly, just object of his ire

To be or not to be; thāt is the question.

When sentence-stress, whether syntactical or rhetorical, falls upon a word of two or more syllables, it is always placed on the syllable which receives the word-accent.

(iii) *Metrical stress* occurs only in verse. It is the stress which is used to mark off the equal time-intervals in the succession of sounds and silences; it falls therefore at the beginning or end of each foot or measure, according to the nature of the rhythm, and is said to mark the *ictus* or beat of the rhythm.

In each line of verse there is a fixed number of feet, a fixed

number of rhythmical beats; and the *ictus* occurs after regular intervals. Most frequently it coincides with a syllable which even in prose would receive a stress by virtue of its function in the sentence; but where this is not so, there is still a tendency to mark by stress the syllable which closes the time-interval. This stress, which often falls on syllables unmarked either by syntactical or by rhetorical accent, or only by a very light one, is what we call metrical stress.

Lanier defines the function of the metrical stress or, as he calls it, the rhythmic accent, as being 'to call the ear's attention to particular sounds in a series of verse-sounds or music-sounds, for the purpose of marking the intervals allotted to each bar, such interval being always that which elapses between any two sounds thus distinguished by the Rhythmic accent' (*Science of Eng. Verse*, p. 120).

§ 6. Is it necessary, however, that the attention of *the ear* shall be called to the sounds which coincide with the position of the *ictus*? Need the *ictus* always be externalized and made audible?

Undoubtedly the words of poetry are most usually arranged in such a way that the *ictus* falls on a syllable which is naturally pronounced with greater emphasis according to the demands of the sense; e. g.

To weep a loss that turns their lights to shade

But take another line:

By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour.

In prose utterance the stresses would be as marked above; but this line occurs in a poem where every verse is obviously of the five-measure type, and the strict rhythmical scheme of the metre demands a verse of five feet here with the stress arranged:

By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour.

(Such a verse could be made by a slight change:

By doctrines set against the varying hour.)

This is a case where the prose accentuation and the metrical accentuation do not fully coincide. Which shall prevail in the conflict? Are we to follow the strict metrical scheme in our minds which seems to require a stress on *to*, or are we to attend merely to the sense?

'Periodicity is the essential quality,' says Mr. Omond, 'accentuation its usual, but not invariable, exponent.' The equal intervals, he thinks, need not always be indicated by stress; so long as full

value is given to the time-interval in reading, the actual marking of the *ictus* is unnecessary. 'Regularity of accentuation is no canon of English verse. All our poets vary its incidence, some much more largely than others. Not only does this avoid monotony; if skilfully used it sharpens our perception of rhythm. Too much regularity dulls attention, which may be startled awake by an unexpected change. A dropped accent, like a dropped syllable, may minister to our perception of periodic recurrence. . . . Accentuation does not constitute the sole and invariable basis of our verse; its essential unchanging element must be sought in that which underlies both syllables and stresses', i. e. time (*Study of Metre*, p. 29).

§ 7. It should, however, be clearly realized that the strict rhythmical scheme is, or should be, always present in the mind; that the ictus must still exist, mentally if not physically, subjectively if not objectively. As soon as the normal movement of rhythm is apprehended, an expectation is set up which provides an imaginary stress, even in places which, not being filled by sound, cannot receive an accent in pronunciation.

Yet féll. Remém|ber, ˘ | and féar to transgréss  
 That shé did gíve | me, ˘ | whose pósy wás  
 Would thén be nóth|ing : ˘ | ˘ Trúths | would be táles  
 Frésh spríng, and súm|mer, ˘ | and wínter hóar.

This was stated emphatically by Patmore, who, after declaring that accent has 'the function of marking, *by whatever means*, certain isochronous intervals', continues: 'Metre implies something measured; . . . The thing measured is the time occupied in the delivery of a series of words. But time measured implies something that measures, and is therefore itself unmeasured; . . . These are two indispensable conditions of metre,—first, that the sequence of vocal utterance, represented by written verse, shall be divided into equal or proportionate spaces; secondly, that the fact of that division shall be made manifest by an ictus or beat, actual or mental, which, like a post in a chain railing, shall mark the end of one space and the commencement of another. This ictus is an acknowledged condition of all possible metre; and its function is, of course, much more conspicuous in languages so chaotic in their syllabic quantities as to render it the only source of metre. Yet all-important as this time beater is, . . . for the most part it has no material and external existence at all, but has its place in the mind, which craves measure in everything, and, wherever the idea of

measure is uncontradicted, delights in marking it with an imaginary beat' (*Essay on English Metrical Law*, Works, 1906, ii. 230-1).

§ 8. But even if an audible accent on a weak syllable is not essential in theory, is it nevertheless given in practice? An undoubtedly widely felt tendency is illustrated by Ruskin's story of how he insisted on accentuating the *of* in 'The ashes of the urn' (*v. sup.*, Ch. II, § 6). The sense, of course, does not demand an accent on *of*, but on the other hand such an accentuation does not positively conflict with phonetic conditions. The distribution of sounds is such that the extreme weakness of the syllables on either side of *of* and its position midway between *ash* and *urn* give it a clear though slight prominence over its immediate neighbours; and of course syntactically and logically *of* is more important than *-es* and *the*. A light stress at most is all that is required, and in fact all that such a word can carry without being absurdly overburdened. It is quite sufficient for metrical purposes if the arsis is heavier than its thesis—the syllable preceding if in rising rhythm, the syllable following if in falling rhythm; that is to say, it is not absolute but relative weight or predominance that counts. The strength may be inherent in the word, or the effect of emphasis may be given by the greater weakness of adjacent sounds. This effect is further encouraged by the mental prominence given to such a syllable by a well-established rhythm arousing an expectation of a beat in that particular place. In such lines as:

And cāught him *by* the hīlt and brāndished hīm  
Thréé tímes, and drēw him únder ín the mére  
And líghtly wēnt the óther tð the kíng.

especially after the unmistakable *xa* rhythm of the preceding lines has caused a preadjustment of attention, there is a strong tendency to give some stress to the syllables *by*, *in*, and *to*, in accordance with the scheme which is held, at least subliminally, in the mind.<sup>1</sup> If this were not felt to be possible, the expectant attention would be frustrated, and pleasure would be destroyed. As it is, however, the mind is satisfied, in its own reading, by a purely ideal beat, for the periodicity is preserved, and the syllables take their right place in the time scheme, without any conflict arising from phonetic or logical conditions.

<sup>1</sup> This is in entire accordance with the results of experiments upon deliberately irregular movements, which showed that a non-rhythmic series always tends to become rhythmic, because we instinctively accentuate at regular intervals.

§ 9. According to the principles stated here, secondary word-accents are available for marking the ictus in verse just as if they were full or primary accents<sup>1</sup>, so that in

His mīnístērs of vēngeance ānd pursūit (P. L. i. 170.)

The sōjournērs of Gōshen whò behēld (P. L. i. 309.)

which have but three full stresses each, the marking of natural subordinate accents gives the five beats required. But it is not always necessary to have recourse to weak accents for ictus, and it is a mistake to do so in cases where, in an unnecessary effort to preserve a regular alternating scheme of stresses, strong word-accents or sense-accents must be disregarded or wrenched. The following scansion shows that this expedient is pressed too far by Professor J. W. Bright of Baltimore :

A mind not tó be changed by place or time

Me, me only, just object of his ire

Unívērśál reproach far worse to bear

Parts óf a single continent

But she in thé calm depths her way could take

Where ín bright bowers immortal forms abide.

He would hardly have committed himself to these inadmissible scansions if he had realized how freely the poets had utilized the principle of equivalence, and introduced monosyllabic or trisyllabic substitution.

But shé | in the cálm | √ dépths | her wáy | could táke

There can be no other reading of the line but this. It is ordinarily only in cases where there is no primary accent available that a secondary stress may be used for ictus; most frequently in places where three light syllables occur in succession. Not only does Professor Bright apparently think that in order to preserve the symmetry of time-relations a secondary accent may override a primary one, but he places subordinate accents where none can possibly be.

In *vēngeance ānd pursūit* the distribution of weight amongst the neighbouring sounds—the heaviness of *veng-* and *-sūit*, and the lightness of the adjacent syllables *-eance* and *pur-* does indicate *and* as the place for a stress; but no one with an ear and mind unbiased would scan *me, me only*, or *unívērśál*, or *in thé calm depths*, violating the distinct word-accent in the first two cases, and disregarding the

<sup>1</sup> This was possible even in the stress system of Old English verse: *in geárdægum*.

heavy *calm* followed by a pause for impressiveness in the third. There are perhaps cases (*v. infra*, § 11-12) of nearly level sentence-stress where the metrical stress gives as it were the casting vote, but there is no possibility of this here.

§ 10. Professor Bright tries to support his method by claiming the incidence of a *pitch-accent* in cases where the force-accent fails; i.e. when there is no natural sentence-stress in the places where the metrical stress should fall in a syllabically regular verse with a strict alternating scheme, an accent can be manufactured by raising the pitch of the voice, and this can serve as the ictus.

Pitch probably does play a part in accentuation, perhaps most prominently in true secondary accents. Experiments by Squire (*Amer. Journ. Psych.* xiii. 560) seemed to show that the force-accent can be strengthened or even replaced by changes in pitch. Other experiments confirm the general belief that accented syllables have a higher pitch than unaccented syllables, or are pronounced with a rising pitch. Professor Scripture (*op. cit.*, pp. 548-9) says length, pitch, and intensity 'are all used to produce strength. . . . A syllable necessarily short may be made as strong as a longer one by making it louder or higher; or a syllable necessarily of small intensity may be strengthened by lengthening it or raising its pitch.' On the other hand, experiments by Mr. H. Woodrow on the Rôle of Pitch in Rhythm (*Psych. Rev.* xviii. No. 1) seemed to show that pitch, intensity, and duration are not, as regards the *perception* of rhythm, interchangeable in function; and that differences in pitch gave, in fact, practically no feeling of rhythm. In the face of this conflicting evidence, therefore, it seems very doubtful whether pitch can *replace* force for the purposes of the rhythmical beat. The ictus, however, is probably nearly always composite. It may be, then, that the reduction of force allows the pitch to stand out with greater comparative prominence in weaker arses, and that this tends to conceal the fact that the syllable is actually stronger. It may be that the mental anticipation of a beat in a certain place may lead to an attempt to give the beat a physical existence, and that while the feeling for rhetorical value allows only a slight increase of force (which however is sufficient for the ictus-function), it imposes no restriction upon the height of tone. In any case the primal importance belongs to the mental beat. If the rhythm were constituted purely and simply by the phonetic, as distinguished from the mental—i.e. intelligible or emotional—importance of the

speech-material, the objection that pitch and force cannot perform the same auditory functions would be fatal. As it is, variation in the external concomitants of the ideal metrical ictus *need* not vitiate the mental rhythm, and *may* have an actual aesthetic value.

The wary prosodist probably will not commit himself to any specific theory of the constitution of accent, merely taking it as the prominence, however produced, of one sound over another. But, apart from the validity of the pitch-theory, it is certain that Professor Bright would apply his method where in fact it is inapplicable. To set metre and meaning, rhythm and rhetoric, in such grotesque conflict as he does, would utterly destroy the pleasure which should result from good verse. Further, his admission, however grudging (*English Versification*, §§ 62-3), of monosyllabic and trisyllabic substitution in isolation, as well as of trochaic substitution (which really is combined substitution), undermines his whole case.

§ 11. In classical prosody there were some feet in which the component syllables were of equal quantitative value—the pyrrhic, composed of two short syllables, and the spondee, composed of two longs. The analogues of these in a metrical system where quantity is replaced by accent would be a stressless foot and a foot with two stresses. The believers in pyrrhics and spondees have frequently observed that these feet are very often found together:

I do not set my life | at a | pin's fee  
                                   o o           i i

Most of the alleged examples are really instances of combined substitution, and should be divided differently:

I do not set my life | at a pín's |  $\wedge$  fée.

There are certainly other lines which show feet of two light syllables, such as in prose would be equally unaccented; but in verse the metrical stress falls on one of these and they are no longer level.

In pŏwer unpléased, impá|tient òf | disgrá|ce<sup>1</sup>

With regard to feet composed of two heavy syllables, one of the clearest instances of the part played by metrical stress is in Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*, 402-4:

<sup>1</sup> The term 'weak ending' or 'light ending' has been applied to the instances occurring in certain Shakespearian plays of lines ending in such light feet, and particularly to monosyllabic endings (such as parts of the auxiliary verb, pronouns, and especially prepositions and conjunctions) upon which the voice cannot rest or can dwell only lightly.

then Sohrab threw  
In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield; | *shārp rāng*  
The iron plates, | *rāng shārp*, | but turned the spear

Here the same two words occur in either line, but in a different order. The two words are equally capable of receiving a heavy accent, but in each case the metrical rhythm demands an ictus on the second; so that whichever word occupies that place receives the metrical stress. It is simply the position which has decided.

§ 12.- In some cases of feet of two heavy syllables, writers since the time of Ten Brink have sometimes had recourse for explanation to a vague *hovering stress* which is somehow divided between the two syllables. Some examples of 'undoubted hovering accent' quoted by Professor Gummere are not in need of that questionable expedient; e.g.

Mark our *cōn*tract. Mark your divorce, young sir  
which should be (unless there is proof of a different pronunciation in early Modern English)

Márk | our cōn|tract. Márk | your divórce, | young sîr.  
There is no cogent reason why, if it had occurred in a nineteenth-century poem, the line

That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel  
should not have been scanned in accordance with its present pronunciation:

That thōu, | deád cōrse, | agaín | in compléte |  $\wedge$  stēel.  
But if at the time of Shakespeare pronunciation was sufficiently uncertain to allow *cōmplete*, this accentuation would be more acceptable.<sup>1</sup>

Again, there is rhetorical emphasis on *his* in Milton's

Was she thy God, that her thou didst obey  
Befóre | *his* vōice? \*

but there is also a syntactical stress on *voice*, and in prose there would be a pause between the two to mark the emphatic *his*. The verse-scheme, however, will not admit a pause, so one stress must stand out over the other; this is done by the metrical ictus giving additional weight to *voice*. Even though the stress is not level, *his* receives sufficient emphasis from being so much heavier than the thesis usually is. So too there is no hovering in

The rûde | fórefáth|ers ôf | the hāmlet sleēp  
Sérvant of Gōd | wēll dône, |  $\wedge$  wēll | hast thou fōught.

<sup>1</sup> The shortness of the unvoiced consonant *t* in *complete* makes this line less clear than those quoted in § 15 below.



In the latter case the conflict is merely between the two kinds of sentence-stress, and is really decided by coincidence of the metrical stress with one or other.

But in a line of Chaucer,

Of clóth-*makyng* she hádde súch an haúnt

if it occurred in Modern English, the metrical scheme and the natural stress would make conflicting claims.<sup>1</sup> The general law is that the metrical stress or sentence-stress can, in words of two or more syllables, fall only on those syllables which receive the word-accent.

In this line, however, the metrical rhythm which demands a stress on *-yng* would be in Modern English at variance with the natural word-accent; and in the words of Ten Brink, 'in delivery a compromise must be attempted of such a character that the hearer remains conscious both of the natural accentuation and of the claims of the rhythm—level stress—veiled rhythm' (§ 274). To name this phenomenon we might use either of these terms, or call it 'distributed accent'. 'Hovering stress' probably represents the subjective impression; but I suppose this is an illusion, and objectively such a thing can have no existence, for accent means the prominence of one syllable over another. Physically, it is possible that we have here an increase of force in the one case, of pitch in the other. In this case we may note a tendency for a finger-beat marking the mental stress to fall actually *before* the beginning of the syllable.

This phenomenon is much less frequent than its exponents make it appear. It may be admitted in

His means of death, his *obscure* funeral

where to scan | *his* *obscúre* | ^ *fún|erál* with the monosyllabic foot followed by two such light syllables would make the line too weak. Possibly, too, in Surrey's line (quoted by Schipper)

With blóð *likewise* | ye must seek your return

for there is considerable uncertainty as to the accentuation of his verse (and even more so of Wyatt's); but here the rhetorical emphasis supports a pause after *blood* and makes it quite satisfactory at least to read:

With blóð | ʌ líke|wise yé | must sēek | your retúrñ.

§ 13. About instances of this type occurring in verse written under the influence of the syllabic idea there is more to be said, if

<sup>1</sup> *clóth-makyng*, however, was almost certainly the M.E. accentuation.

alternation of stressed and unstressed is the theoretic normal. Such a line in Glover or in Johnson would probably, *ceteris paribus*, in the writer's mind be scanned in *complete steel*. Even accepting modern pronunciation, this would be possible without recourse to any pitch-theory, simply because it is relative, and not absolute, stress-value that counts for the ictus. Without any straining we can give four degrees of stress to the four syllables in *complete steel*:

*Com-* is stronger than *in*, and *steel* than *-plete*. The difference in strength between *com-* and *-plete* may or may not be compensated to the ear by giving unusual tonic height to *com-*; this does not affect the position of the ictus. In verse which is obviously of this alternating syllabic type, one might frequently accept this scansion; though in the freer rhythms of Shakespeare or of Coleridge, and some of their successors, it is in general much less satisfactory.

§ 14. In some cases—trissyllabic compounds in particular—where a compensatory pause cannot be utilized, we find a tendency to avoid adjacent accents by transferring a secondary stress to an unstressed syllable, so that the syllables are accented alternately; e. g. *bláckmailers*, *béd-fellów*, *wíne-cellàr*. This is usually no more than a tendency, but when encouraged by the help of a metrical beat, it amounts to a distinct *wrenching* of accent in such lines as:

Besides her good old *grándmothèr*, who doted. (*Don Juan*, l. xxviii.)

To sing for thee; low-creeping *stráwberries*

Their summer coolness; pent up *bútterflies*. (*Endymion*, i. 257-8.)

A further reason for the wrenching of accent, in addition to the demands of metrical rhythm, is the law that riming words must be similarly stressed. For instance, in the following line from Morris's *Lady of the Land* (268):

Lord of this land, master of all *cunning*

*cunning* rimes with *thing*, and the wrenching is somewhat violent. It is less so in *stráwberries* (as above) and in

Shading its Ethiop berries, and *woodbine*

Of velvet leaves and bugle-blooms divine (*Endym.* ii. 414.)

Whenever the rhythm is thus made unnatural, as in:

Who thus were ripe for high *contémpulating* (*Endym.* i. 355.)

Golden or rainbow-sided or *purplish* (*Endym.* ii. 111.)

which rime respectively with *ring* and *fish*, the lines must be condemned as bad. In another case:

They gazed upon Endymion. *Enchantment*

Grew drunken; and would have its head and bent

(*Endym.* iii. 801-2.)

the natural rhythm might be preserved by scanning with a redundant syllable:

They gāzed upōn Endý|miōn. | Enchánt(ment

and freely admitting the rime to be a bad one; but it is not likely that Keats would have done so.

§ 15. Mr. Bridges considers that in general Milton deliberately excluded recession of accent from *Paradise Lost*;<sup>1</sup> and treats most of the possible cases on the model of

The ploughman lost his sweat, ānd thě grēen cōrn

which, however, he considers to end in a foot of two unstressed syllables preceding a foot of two heavy syllables, and not as a case of combined substitution. Milton was probably too conscientious a scholar of the classical tongues to invert the position of arsis and thesis, by scanning *sérène*, contrary to the Latin quantity and accent (*sērénus*); and it is unlikely that he would depart from the Latin accentuation of *divine*, *supreme*, *complete*, *extreme*, despite the long first syllables, even in *Comus*, where Mr. Bridges would admit recession.

Mr. Bridges admits some examples even in *Paradise Lost* (p. 72); but these might conceivably be scanned .

Next Chēm(os, || the obscēne | ʌ drēad | of Mōab's sōns (i. 406.)

(with a hypermetrical syllable at the internal pause),

And sat as Princes; whom | the Supréme | ʌ Kíng (i. 735.)

Encamp their legions; òr | with obscūre | ʌ wíng (ii. 132.)

But it is probably better to recognize an intermediate possibility already suggested in the case of so-called level stress.

And sat as Princes; whom | the Sup|réme Kíng |

o 1 2 3

The degrees of accent are those marked; so long as *Sup-* is heavier than *the*, and *King* than *-preme*, it does not matter that *-preme* is heavier than *Sup-*, and there is no need to invoke the recession theory even to preserve the very problematical alternating character of Milton's verse.

<sup>1</sup> 'Because the uncertainty which it introduces as to whether a syllable should be stressed or not, and the tendency which it has to make the verse smooth at all cost, would infect his inversions with uncertainty, and on these the character of his rhythm in a great measure depended' (p. 71 [1921]).



*forêt, Sir James that bold Barón, thou proud portér.* This is imitated by Coleridge:

Is this my own countrée?

where the accent in *countrée* was not originally a wrenched one, for the word is of Romance origin, and in Middle English therefore retained its own accentuation for some time.

§ 18. *Conflict of Accent: Counterpoint of Rhythms.* Let us pick up the threads of a rather long chapter on Accentuation. It is obvious that conflicting claims may sometimes be exerted by the natural rhythm of the phrase, i. e. by the normal speech-rhythm, and by the strict rhythm demanded by the metrical scheme. The latter may not be neglected, yet the former should not be violated. If the normal accentuation of the phrase is falsified, the result will distress a reader who is following the flow of idea. If the natural stress relations are preserved when at variance with the metrical rhythm, the resultant conflict will frustrate the expectant attention, and jar upon the instinctive feeling for rhythm. In either case, unless there is sufficient rhetorical or artistic reason, the line is so far bad.

The technical problem of the poet is to take the strict metrical scheme of rhythm, and on this basis counterpoint the rhythmical material provided by the normal stress relations of prose speech. Here, as everywhere in art, the process of selection is of prime importance, and whatever material proves intractable has to be rejected. In some cases the conflict is only apparent, and careful attention to pause and emphasis will show the verse to be a good one. Occasionally a compromise ('hovering accent') is possible. Often, however, a choice has to be made between two extremes. The natural speech-accent may give way to the demands of the metrical rhythm, most often in lyrics, which approximate to music and account melody more important than meaning,<sup>1</sup> and in ballads, which were sung to the harp, and also perhaps in verse deliberately syllabic and alternating in scheme. This extreme is favoured by Professor J. W. Bright, who, in the scansiones quoted above, applies the method unnecessarily. On the other hand, the natural accentuation of prose-speech, i. e. the logical or rhetorical stress, may prevail, usually in cases where meaning is held of more

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Flaubert's opinion that a fine verse which means nothing is better than a less fine verse which means something: 'un beau vers qui ne signifie rien est supérieur à un vers moins beau qui signifie quelque chose.'

account than melody (e.g. in Browning and in Byron's *Don Juan*): and as a result the movement of the verse is jolting or actually defective and halting. This extreme is supported by those who try to base verse upon a succession of rhetorical units grouped about the natural 'attention-stresses', but with no real principle of equality. They tend to regard verse-form as something which is artificially imposed from without, and which unjustifiably interferes with the exact presentation of ideas in order to produce a beautiful combination of sounds.<sup>1</sup>

A poet who is master of his craft can, however, pay attention to the requirements of verse without disregarding those of sense. Tennyson, a master of technique, is sometimes said to have advised that his verses should be read as prose, but apparently in his own practice he was scrupulously careful in attending to the metre, and we are told that 'Tennyson in reading his poems emphasized the beat of the verse in a way that would have been found intolerable in any one else' (W. J. Stone in Bridges, *Milton's Prosody*, 1901, pp. 134-5<sup>2</sup>). In the line

Let the bell be tolled

he gave a strong accent to *Let* in order to have three stresses, saying, 'It wanted three strokes of the bell, not two'. On the other hand, in lines like the following from Arnold the neglect of rhythmical satisfaction has no rhetorical justification or compensation:

To arms, and cry for v<sup>e</sup>ngeance upon thee.

The metrical ictus, then, falls generally on a syllable which is already capable of classification as heavy because, quite apart from metrical considerations, it receives a natural speech-stress. Quantity and pitch-accent may play a part in this weight, but the permanent and most important element is intensity or force-accent. The ictus may, however, fall on a syllable light in nature, and in this case the incidence of ictus is marked by a relative force-accent (metrical stress) which makes that syllable stronger than it would be in prose, so long as there is no violation of natural phonetic and logical values. Again, pitch may play a part in this ictus in addition to intensity, but probably not instead of it.

The ictus in English, then, is a metrical stress giving increased

<sup>1</sup> See M. H. Liddell, *Scientific Study of Eng. Poetry*, for an example of this point of view.

<sup>2</sup> Stone also notes that 'his metrical experiments have the accents consistently, with only one or two exceptions, coinciding with the metrical ictus'.

intensity to those syllables which, at the beginning or end of a unitary measure or foot, mark the rhythm of poetry. It is generally located in a naturally stressed syllable, but if not, it tends to provide for itself the necessary relative stress. Pitch-accent may be, but is not necessarily, associated with this force-accent. In any case ictus gives mental predominance to certain syllables which occur at periodic intervals; and that mental predominance results in perceptible predominance amongst the series of sounds.

In English verse, therefore, the metrical ictus is probably more marked than in classical verse, because in the latter the regular and definite concurrence with an unmistakably long syllable makes the ictus itself less conspicuous. But in English verse the metrical stress of the ictus becomes either, on the one hand, stronger by alliance with a natural speech-stress already existent, or, on the other hand, more conspicuous because it falls on a syllable which in prose would receive no appreciable stress.

## IX QUANTITY

§ 1. 'Without attention to quantity,' said Cowper, 'good verse cannot be written.' The function of quantity in English verse has been the subject of much controversy. In so far as the periodicity of verse or the equivalence of feet depends upon time, i. e. duration of syllables (together with silent intervals), quantity is, of course, all-important, and from this point of view should need no further discussion. But the part played by quantity in connexion with the marking of the ictus, i. e. with the marking or externalizing of the mental rhythm of poetry, requires further examination.

In English verse the ictus falls normally, according to almost universal opinion, on a syllable which in prose speech would be naturally stressed; and many metrists have declared that quantity plays no essential part in the laws of its rhythmical structure. A. J. Ellis declared guardedly that though quantity has much influence on the oral effect, it has no part in the fixed laws of English verse-rhythm; while Professor Liddell, an American scholar who relies mainly on stresses, boldly avers that 'the length or shortness of an English syllable has nothing to do with the determination of the forms of English verse' (*Scientific Study of Eng. Poetry*, p. 18).

§ 2. Classical verse of course depends eminently on quantity in both the ways distinguished above. Firstly, the sum of the quantities of syllables of successive feet in the same series is always a constant value, as in the following schemes :

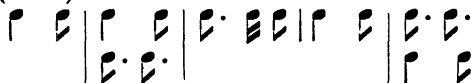
Hexameter :



Cretic :



Sapphic (lesser) :



This temporal equivalence of the feet is particularly easy to recognize in classical verse, because in classical prosody syllables have lengths assigned to them which bear simple proportions to each other. In epic verse this is most clear, for there are only two quantities—long and short, in the ratio of two to one. In lyric verse other ratios are admitted, viz.  $\frac{3}{2}$ , 1,  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , 2, i.e.  $\text{long} \text{ long} \text{ short} \text{ long}$ , or 1, 2, 3, 4, i.e.  $\text{long} \text{ long} \text{ long} \text{ long}$ ; and failure to realize this for long caused much perplexity with regard to the rhythm of Sapphic and other Greek lyric metres.

But even in Greek many quantities are not absolutely fixed. In epic verse many syllables were regarded as 'common', and capable of being used as long or short according to the needs of the metre; and in lyric verse the same word might have a different value according as it entered into a 3-time or 4-time metre— $\text{long} \text{ long}$  or  $\text{long} \text{ short}$ . And even in epic verse many syllables which according to rule are considered short are found in positions which require a long syllable (cf. Jebb's *Homer*, Appendix 5).

Secondly, in epic verse at least, and usually in lyric, the metrical ictus always fell on a syllable whose quantity was long.<sup>1</sup> This does not necessarily mean that the ictus is identical with length;

<sup>1</sup> This may appear to be untrue of the paeonic scheme  $\text{long} \text{ long} \text{ long} \text{ long}$ , but in many metres the *διποδία* or combination of two feet was regarded as the real unit, and in these cases it is possible that the alternate feet had only a minor ictus, which might rest on a shorter syllable. The *διποδία*



but it does mean that the Greeks considered that, however it was constituted, the ictus should fall on a syllable which had body enough to carry the beat. The speech-accent or *róvoi*, which are represented ordinarily by the accent marks in Greek, depend on differences in pitch, and evidently presuppose a much more musical delivery than that of English. It has therefore been frequently assumed that *all* accent in Greek is pitch-accent, but modern opinion has been more ready to believe that the metrical ictus must have exhibited itself even in Greek by means of increased stress, i. e. by force-accent or intensity.<sup>1</sup>

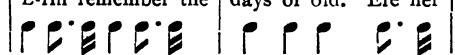
In any case the metrical ictus in Greek was under no necessity of coinciding with the *róvoi* or word accents, which depend on pitch, any more than 'accent' in music must coincide with a high note. Similarly the pitch-accent was independent of syllabic quantities. In Greek speech-verse, to avoid perplexity, the ictus was regularly made to coincide with long quantity; but evidently for the sake of variety the disagreement of metrical accents and speech-accent was welcomed, except at the end of a line, as in the last two feet of the hexameter, where tonic accent was usually made to reinforce the metrical ictus upon the first (long) syllables of the final dactyl and spondee, in order to mark the end of the verse (secondary rhythm) in the clearest way.

§ 3. The questions for decision are:

- (i) Is there any perceptible 'quantity' in English?
- (ii) Does quantity fulfil any function in English verse? If so, what function? In what relation does it stand to stress or other determinants of rhythm?

The failure of the early Elizabethan and other experimentalists in verse written on so-called classical principles has probably led

would thus be like a bar of modern music, which has the major accent on the first note and also a minor accent within the bar.

Let | Ê-rin remèbber the | dáy's of òld. Ere her |  


<sup>1</sup> The latest expression of this belief that I have seen is by Mr. D. S. MacColl, who argues that stress is necessary in all verse, classical and modern, for otherwise there would be nothing to group the quantities, i. e. to mark the time. He goes on to say that it is 'fantastic to suppose that measures derived from the march and the dance were devoid of stress, that Greek choruses were danced but not accented, and that time was beaten to all lyric music, and the marks of beating (thesis and arsis) recognized in every spoken foot with no effect on the intensity of the sounds produced' (Eng. Assoc., *Essays and Studies*, vol. v).

to much vague disbelief in quantity as a possible determinant of verse-rhythm in English. But it can hardly be denied that quantity can be distinguished in accurately spoken English. Apart from stress, *strange*, *strength*, *squelch*, *grind* are obviously long, just as *it*, *at*, *up*, *cap* are unmistakably short.

It must be observed, however, at the outset that the term 'quantity' is variously used in reference

- (1) to the character of vowel sounds,
- (2) to the length of syllables;

and that even in the latter application it has two meanings:

(a) the actual length of time occupied in the pronunciation of syllables in natural speech, which obviously may vary freely;

(β) the lengths that are conventionally fixed for metrical purposes, as in classical prosody, where there are, in epic verse, two lengths, long and short, the latter being reckoned equivalent to half the former.

§ 4. In English, as probably indeed in the natural speech of the Greeks,<sup>1</sup> syllables have not this simple mathematical ratio of length; and furthermore, they have in general no fixed value, the same syllable in many cases varying in duration according to its position amongst others. We should classify *light* as a 'long' syllable, but in the phrase *a moonlight night* it is obviously shorter than *night*, and shorter than it is in the sentence *the light was fierce*, if we consider its actual extension in time.<sup>2</sup> As Sweet truly said, 'We lengthen or shorten syllables without scruple in order to make the feet of the requisite length.'

Again, the accepted division of vowels into 'long' and 'short' affords no valid criterion of actual duration. As Professor Wyld says, 'our so-called short vowels are often of considerable length'. There is much less difference in actual time of pronunciation between *mate* and *mat* than classicists would make it appear. The difference, in fact, is sometimes one of phonetic production as much as of duration; depending on such considerations as the muscular tensivity or slackness of the tongue, the width of the air passage over it, and the rate of breath-expenditure. The vowels in *mate* and *mat* are

<sup>1</sup> 'The speech quantities of their syllables being as indeterminate as ours are' (R. Bridges in *Musical Antiquary*, Oct. 1909).

<sup>2</sup> See also examples in Ch. VI. § 8.

also different in quality ( $\bar{e}$  and  $\bar{a}$ ); the short sound corresponding to *mate* being *met*, formed with the tongue slack instead of tense.

Another important element in syllabic duration is the length of the consonants; and of course it is not the mere arithmetical sum of isolated sounds but the mass in combination (including pauses, if any) that counts for the ear or for the auditory imagination.

In illustration of these points it will be sufficient to compare *goad* with the obviously shorter *coat* (which Stone and others would regard as equal), and even *bad* (two long consonants + 'short' vowel) with *pale* (two short consonants + 'long' vowel).

§ 5. When H. A. J. Munro declared that we have 'no instinctive feeling for and knowledge of quantity', that 'it does not exist even potentially in any modern language', and that we could know it 'only by the rules of prosody', he must have referred, not to natural quantity, but only to conventional quantities like those assumed in classical prosody. But it must be remembered that, as Sweet said, 'in practice it is impossible fully to harmonize the natural quantity and stress of a language with the artificial quantity and stress of metre'. There is, of course, no certainty that the rules of prosody will ever lead us to anything more than an approximate knowledge of the natural quantities of a dead language; but to future ages modern English verse will hardly be even an approximate guide to the natural quantities of nineteenth-century speech, because of the absence of any quantitative prosody.

Furthermore, after recognizing the existence in English of some syllables which always give the impression of length, e.g. *strained*, *shrieks*, and of others which must be short, e.g. *an*, *the*, we must observe the great number of syllables which are of intermediate lengths, and could be classified only as 'half-long'; syllables which even the strictest classicist would admit to be 'common' for the purposes of a prosody like that of classical epic verse, i.e. capable of being reckoned long or short according to metrical requirements.

§ 6. Although no English prosodic convention has yet established a system of fixed quantities, most people of unvitiated ear have a sense for the natural quantities of the language. What part do these natural quantities, varying in degree, play in our verse-structure?

For this examination we must recall the observation made earlier in the chapter (§ 1), that quantity may be important ( $\alpha$ ) for its filling

in of the time of a foot, ( $\beta$ ) for its connexion with the ictus which marks out the rhythm.

(a) *The Duration of Feet.* If the feet of English verse are of equal duration, syllabic quantities must be of first importance. In the classical dactylic hexameter every foot had the constant value of four short syllables, the staple foot being the dactyl ( $\text{—} \cup \cup$ ,  $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$ ); but the only foot which could be substituted was the spondee ( $\text{—} \text{—}$ ,  $\text{♩} \text{♩}$ ),<sup>1</sup> since the prosody of speech-verse confined itself to the simple values of long and short, in the ratio of two to one. But in the corresponding English metre, equivalent feet with other and more complicated proportions are admitted. For the dactyl  $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$ , may be substituted not merely a spondee, but feet of the form  $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$ ,  $\text{♩} \cdot \text{♩} \text{♩}$ ;  $\text{♩} \cdot \text{♩}$ ,  $\text{♩} \cdot \text{♩} \text{♩}$ . Or in a verse in triple time, where the typical foot is an iamb ( $\cup \text{—}$ ,  $\text{♩} \text{♩}$ ), feet of the form  $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$ ,  $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$ ;  $\text{♩} \cdot \text{♩}$ ;  $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$  might be substituted, or simply  $\text{♩}$ ; or more complicated proportions still,  $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$ ,  $\text{♩} \cdot \text{♩} \cdot \text{♩}$ . And for any of these syllables save the first in a foot substituted for a dactyl, or the last in a foot standing instead of an iamb, may be substituted a pause or rest of the requisite length. And in fact the exact ratios between the constituent elements of the feet would often be differently estimated by different persons.

The English system has its advantage—a greater elasticity and freedom, which lends itself to effects of greater ease and naturalness; but also its correspondent danger—greater laxity, which in weak hands often produces rhythmical uncertainty. More is left to individual discretion; and the result may be a more subtle melody, or on the other hand we may have feet which only by dint of straining can be made to fit into the rhythmical scheme. This straining may occasionally be artistically justified because of the attention it attracts to important words or shades of thought and feeling; but at other times it produces only an awkward, halting movement, or even a positive discord. The merits and defects of the two systems are analogous to those of classical and romantic

<sup>1</sup> Except at the end of a verse, where a trochee might have its time made up by the final pause,  $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{—}$ .

art in general; there is a similar contrast between firm and clear-cut outlines and more pliant and wavering or indistinct forms.

§ 7. (β) *Its Connexion with the Ictus.* The connexion of quantity with the metrical ictus is not quite so certain. A definite theory is put forward by those who identify quantity with stress, or assert that the two are invariable concomitants. Poe said that emphasis 'can, of course, make any syllable as long as desired. . . . *Accented* syllables are, of course, always long.' Sylvester considered that Poe's principles were 'perfectly right . . . that the substratum of measure is time; that an accented syllable is a long syllable, and that an unaccented syllable is a short one of varying degrees of duration; and that feet in modern metre are of equal length' (*The Laws of Verse*, p. 64). H. A. J. Munro, too, could not recognize 'any real distinction of quantity except that which is produced by accentuated and unaccentuated syllables'.

Experiments have shown that a syllable is usually longer when stressed than when unstressed; and it is well known to phonologists that if an originally stressed syllable has its stress transferred to another syllable, it is liable to become, and usually does become, shortened. It must not be said that quantity is *identical* with stress—they are quite distinct properties of sound—but the common coincidence of force and length in English can hardly be without significance. Allowing for disturbing conditions which differences in pitch, quality, &c., might introduce in apparent contravention of the law, we may safely assert a general tendency for stress to affect duration. For example, in Gray's line

The bréezy cáll of incense bréathing mórn

-*cense* might be the longest syllable<sup>1</sup> in the line, if abstracted from the influence of stress; but here its position between two stressed syllables *in-* and *breath-* deprives it of all possibility of prominence, and so causes it to be shorter or, at most, no longer than *breath-*, as will be clear if it is compared with *his wórds incénse the Kíng*.

The speech-accent of the Greeks depended upon pitch and not on stress. This left their nice perception of quantitative values unvitiated, so that they could base their verse primarily upon quantity, without being tempted (as English poets too often are—witness examples below and elsewhere) to force the accentuation of short syllables and rely on metrical stress to make good any

<sup>1</sup> Stone says *-censbr-*, but of course there is no such syllable.

roughnesses of adjustment. In classical epic verse, examples of the ictus falling on a short syllable, as in Virgil, *Aen.* vi. 254, *Pingue super oleum*, or Homer, *Od.* xii. 423, are exceptional.

In English verse it is obvious that syllables used in the arsis are generally long, and those in the thesis most frequently short. But this is not an invariable rule, and we have already seen numerous instances in iambic verse of short arsis and long thesis (so-called pyrrhic and spondee). There are also examples where the thesis seems to be even longer than the arsis; as in

Māke pūn|ishmént | a críme

In some of these cases the neighbouring sounds are so arranged that the metrical stress easily carries off the line, as in

Sweet Écho, swéetest Nymph, that liv'st unseen.

and perhaps in

And while in that vāst sōlitude to which

and

Five years have past; five sūmmers, with the length  
Of five long winters!<sup>1</sup>

but certainly not in

Make sa|tíre á | lampoon and fiction lie

where *a* is shorter and weaker than any of the syllables near it; while the defective balance of such readings as

Blēw mím|ic hootings to the silent owls

When thou return'st, | thōu tñ | this place wilt see

perhaps justifies our accepting different scansiones, such as | *Blēw* | *mimic* hōb|ings and | *thōu* | in this plāce |, although these are not quite satisfactory.

§ 8. If one of the stepping stones in a turbulent stream is somewhat narrow and unstable, there is the more need for the others to be broad and firmly planted; just so in good verse the ictus normally prefers to find a naturally strong support. For this reason there is a predominance in arsis of syllables that are long as well as

<sup>1</sup> The first syllable of *summers* is not made long by the doubled consonant, which is not so pronounced, as it represents O.E. *sumer*. The pause after *summers* probably helps; and, sense being disregarded, a sound-arrangement like

Five winters with the length of five | lōng sūmmers

would be better still, for the final syllable, being hypermetrical, and not required for any other foot, would give support to the short *sum-*, very much as in Old English two short syllables separated only by a single consonant might be regarded as combining to form a 'resolved arsis'.

stressed, while monotony of cadence is avoided and scope given for fine effects by occasional short syllables, as in

Thou canst not touch the free|dōm ōf | my mind

and by a skilful intermixture of both long and short in thesis. But there is no rhythmical necessity for the arsis to be *longer* than the thesis so long as the ictus falls at its proper interval and falls upon a syllable which, by its own importance or by the skilful distribution of weight amongst surrounding syllables, is strong enough to carry the ictus.

There is thus no distinct and deliberate recognition of quantity as an essential for the ictus, although it is a general concomitant. But in good poetry we expect the normal line to run with considerable smoothness; and this is usually ensured by making the ictus fall on a long syllable, for there is then no conflict or disturbance. When it falls on one distinctly shorter than that in the thesis, this may be done either (*a*) through mere carelessness, or want of ear, or (*b*) deliberately, to produce some special effect of emphasis or suggestion.

Whereas quantity, then, ordinarily coincides with the metrical stress and supports it, it may set up a counterclaim on the attention, which does not destroy the metrical rhythm, but, if skilfully managed, gives an enhanced pleasure in the perception of the mental rhythm that is striving to embody itself in an external form, but apparently for the moment at variance with it.

## ADDENDA

### I. RELATIONS BETWEEN STRESS AND QUANTITY

(*a*) *Experimental Evidence.* Professor E. W. Scripture (*Experimental Phonetics*, pp. 509-10) concludes from experiments by Mr. Miyake that, in English at least, increase in duration is ordinarily associated with increased stress. He suggests, however, that 'these associations are essentially mental ones, and not interdependent physical or physiological phenomena'. Mental predominance of some kind, however produced, is of course the paramount essential, but, on the other hand, in dealing with speech-sounds it must be evident that the increase of vocal energy necessary to produce an increased intensity of utterance naturally causes, or at least facilitates, a prolongation of sound; or to put it in another way, a sound that lasts longer ordinarily requires more

energy than a shorter one, just as a long jump requires a more vigorous spring than a short one. Increased emphasis needs increased muscular work, which produces also increased duration. From experiments upon the mental interpretation of variations in a series of simple sounds, Mr. T. L. Bolton concluded that increased force suggested a fictitious idea of prolongation, and that prolongation suggested a fictitious idea of force (*American Journal of Psychology*, Jan. 1894). But although the more forcible physical act which produced the sound may have occupied no more time than the less forcible: yet the former, *ex hypothesi*, must have set up more powerful vibrations than the latter, and these would continue longer; so that the sound, as distinct from the productive movement, would then really be prolonged by emphasis.

(b) *The Classicist View.* Mr. Bridges states that 'many of our words are accented independently of their quantities . . . e.g. *māgīstrate*, *prolific*' (*loc. cit.*, p. 27). Of course a lexicon will mark the first syllable of *māgīstrātus* with a short *a*, and the three consonants *-str* make the next syllable long by classical rules. But this does not represent the natural syllabic quantities of the English word *māgistrāle* as heard by an unbiased ear. As we pronounce the word the *t* certainly, and probably the *s*, belongs to the last syllable, so that the syllabic division is *madzhi-strate* or perhaps *madzhis-trate* at most. When pronounced with level stress, the first syllable occupies as long a time as the second; if it receives the chief stress, the voice dwells on it, and its sound lasts longer. (When the syllable ends, the tongue is already in the *-d* position.) The difference in syllabic division is probably due to the tendency of the English word-accent to recede towards the beginning of the word, which induces the vowel to connect itself more strongly with preceding than with succeeding consonants.

W. J. Stone admits that 'in ordinary rapid pronunciation we habitually shorten unaccented syllables, often slurring or half leaving out consonants', and instances 'Clough's dactyl *silenced but*, where *ncd b* have all to be made equivalent to little more than one consonant' (Bridges, *Milton's Prosody*, 1901, p. 145). Plautus does this, even 'in verses that are meant to scan [i.e. quantitatively], not merely to go by accent, like Clough's'. But it is dismissed as a 'colloquial licence' which we do not expect in elevated poetry. Careless pronunciation, Stone argues, is natural on the comic stage, with its imitation of common life, but the accent 'would not be allowed by educated Romans to cause any contraction, the full



value being given to every syllable' (*ibid.*).<sup>1</sup> But the 'educated Romans' were educated into an artificial system adopted from Greek, wherein, the accent depending on pitch, there was nothing to prevent the full quantitative value being given to every syllable. In the language of Plautus the original stress-accent of the native tongue survived, and there, as in English speech, and the verse founded upon it (true song-verse may exhibit differences), unstressed syllables did not always receive their full quantitative values. But in English there need not be any contraction or 'half leaving out'; sounds may be hurried over without being lost or even mutilated.

## II. POE ON QUANTITY

'In general, a syllable is long or short, just as it is difficult or easy of enunciation. The *natural* long syllables are those encumbered—the *natural* short syllables are those *unencumbered*—with consonants; all the rest is mere artificiality and jargon. The Latin Prosodies have a rule that "a vowel before two consonants is long". This rule is deduced from "authority"—that is, from the observation that vowels so circumstanced, in the ancient poems, are always in syllables long by the laws of scansion. The philosophy of the rule is untouched, and lies simply in the physical difficulty of giving voice to such syllables—of performing the lingual evolutions necessary for their utterance. Of course it is not the *vowel* that is long (although the rule says so), but the syllable of which the vowel is a part. It will be seen that the length of a syllable, depending on the facility or difficulty of its enunciation, must have great variation in various syllables; but for the purposes of verse we suppose a long syllable equal to two short ones, and the natural deviation from this relativeness we correct in perusal. The more closely our long syllables approach this relation with our short ones, the better, *ceteris paribus*, will be our verse: but if the relation does not exist of itself we force it by emphasis, which can, of course, make any syllable as long as desired;—or, by an effort we can pronounce with unnatural brevity a syllable that is naturally

<sup>1</sup> Stone's argument illustrates the danger of putting an impassable barrier between poetry and the living speech. He also objected to a verse 'reading itself'. Even for Latin his remarks on the vulgarity of Plautus or his actors do not dispose of the case. Moreover Virgil did not always disdain the contractions of colloquial speech (cf. *Aen.* vi. 780, vii. 603, x. 487, &c.); although of course he avoids several licences peculiar to Plautus. Stone believes that the speech-accent in English, as in Greek, is constituted by pitch; and therefore thinks that 'the accent in English does not lengthen the syllable at all'.

too long. *Accented* syllables are, of course, always long, but where *unencumbered* with consonants, must be classed among the *unnaturally* long. Mere custom has declared that we shall accent them—that is to say, dwell on them; but no inevitable lingual difficulty forces us to do so. In fine, every long syllable must of its own accord occupy in its utterance, or must be *made* to occupy, precisely the time demanded for two short ones. The only exception to this rule is found in the caesura.'

## X

## HYPERCATALECTIC VERSE

§ 1. A normal verse in rising rhythm ends on a stressed syllable, or in other words the line ends with the final arsis. But often—the frequency varies with different poets or with different periods of their development—the last word ends with an unstressed syllable; i. e. there is a hypermetrical syllable after the final arsis:

or till another Cáes(ar)  
Have added slaughter to the sword of tráit(ors  
(*ſ. Caes. v. i. 54-5.*)  
But since the affairs of men do rest incér(tain (*ib. 96.*)  
O Cassius, Brutus gave the word too éarl(y (*ib. iii. 5.*)

This extra syllable that is added to a line whose metrical scheme would be complete without it is called a *redundant* syllable, or the line is said to have a *double* or *feminine ending*.

Puttenham naïvely explains that metres of an odd number of syllables are only allowable when the 'accent fallés upon the *penultima* or last save one sillable of the verse, which doth so drowne the last, as he seemeth to passe away in a manner unpronounced, and so make the verses seeme even' (*Arte of English Poesie*, II. iv.).

Usually this feminine ending is the final syllable of a word that has two or more syllables; but sometimes a redundant monosyllabic word is used:

Or felt the flatteries that grów upón (it  
Yourself pronounce their office. I must téll (you  
As not to know the language I have lív'd (in  
Pray speak in English. Here are some will thánk (you  
(*Henry VIII.*)

This monosyllabic feminine ending is characteristic of Fletcher's verse, and especially peculiar to Fletcher are lines where the

redundant monosyllable is so heavy or important that it cannot be slurred over :

Cōlour'd with smōoth excūses. Wās't a friēnd's (part  
To hide his head then when honour cāll'd (hīm  
And stand upon as strong and honest guārds (tōo

Milton's *Comus*, which shows Fletcher's influence, has

Come not too near ; you fall on iron stākes (ēlse (v. 491.)  
Bore a bright golden flowre, but nōt in thīs (sōil (v. 633.)

Indeed in the last case perhaps one ought to scan | *in this sōil*, as also in one of Fletcher's most marked examples :

Welcome to the court, sweet beauties ! Now the court shines.

Occasionally we find two redundant syllables :

Like one that means his proper harm in mān(acles (*Coriol.* I. ix. 57.)  
Was dukedom large enough : of tēmporal rōy(alties. (*Temp.* I. ii. 110.)  
The region of my heart : be Kent unmān(nerly (*Lear*, I. i. 147.)

and Schipper quotes from Fletcher instances of three and four :

What young thing's this ?—Goodmōrrow, bēauteous gēnt(iewoman  
No sir, I dare not leave her to that sōl(itariness

It might be claimed that the two redundant syllables make up an extra foot, and in the age of Dryden and Pope alexandrines were deliberately introduced in five-foot lines.

§ 2. In falling rhythms hypermetrical syllables are found at the beginning of the line, i. e. in *anacrusis* (as they were frequently found in Old English Verse) :

Ówning her wéakness,  
Her) évil beláviour,  
And) léaving with méekness,  
Her) síns to her Sáviour. (HOOD.)

Swéeter thán those dáinty píes ^  
Of) vénison ? O generous food ! (KEATS.)

§ 3. The justification for this extra syllable, whether final or initial, is that it seems to fill in the natural pause between two successive verses. It is important to observe that by doing this it tends to cause a continuous flow by making the transition smoother from one verse to another ; a free use of it is apt, therefore, to weaken the metrical (as distinct from rhythmical) character of the verse.

Alas! poor wenches, where are now your for(tunes?  
 Shipwracked upon a kingdom where no pi(ty,  
 No friends, no hope, no kindred weep for me;  
 Almost no grave allowed me. Like the li(ly,  
 That once was mistress of the field and flour(ish'd,  
 I'll hang my head and per(ish.

*Wolsey.*

If your grace  
 Could but be brought to know our ends are hon(est,  
 You'd feel more comfort. Why should we, good la(dy,  
 Upon what cause, wrong you? alas! our plac(es,  
 The way of our profession is against (it:  
 We are to cure such sorrows, not to sow (them.

I know you have a gentle noble temp(er,  
 A soul as even as a calm: pray think (us  
 Those we profess, peace-makers, friends, and serv(ants.  
 (*Henry VIII*, III. i. 148 et seq.)

In some cases, were it not for the rime, a word that forms the anacrusis of one line in falling rhythm would seem to fill up a truncated foot at the end of the previous line. Thus

Owning her | wéakness ^,  
 Her) évil be|háviour ^,  
 And) léaving with | méekness ^  
 Her) sins to her | Sáviour.

might be printed:

Owning her | wéakness, her  
 Évil be|háviour, and  
 Léaving with | méekness her  
 Sins to her | Sáviour.

without altering the *framework* of the primary rhythm.

Poe, after quoting the opening of Byron's *Bride of Abydos*, points out that its rhythmical flow cannot be exhibited by citing single verses, but that the lines are continuous (just as in the blank verse of Milton and the heroic verse of Keats) and form a verse-paragraph.

Know ye the | land where the | cypress and | myrtle Are | emblems of |  
 deeds that are | done in their | clime, Where the | rage of the | vulture, the |  
 love of the | turtle Now | melt into | softness, now | madden to | crime. |

Know ye the | land of the | cedar and | vine, Where the | flowers ever  
 blossom, &c.

Whether Poe was right in considering this dactylic rather than anapaestic is not here in question; but he has certainly added something to the rationale of hypermetrical verse.

§ 4. Since the pause at the end of a verse allows the addition of an extra syllable, it is possible that a strong internal pause should afford the same facility, as in

But mine own sáfe(ties. ¶ You máy be rightly just. (*Macb.* iv. iii. 30.)

For goodness dare not chéck (thee; ¶ wear thóu thy wrongs. (*ib.* 33.)

The old French heroic verse—the *vers décasyllabe* of the *Chanson de Roland* and the *chansons de geste* in general—could have an extra syllable, if weak (*atone*), after the fourth syllable, the usual place for the caesura; the feminine caesura thus formed being called Epic.<sup>1</sup>

En son visage <sup>a</sup> sa color at perdude (*Chanson de Roland*, 87.)

Since this metre exerted an enormous influence on the Middle English heroic verse, it is extremely likely that the extra syllable was deliberately admitted as hypermetrical by Chaucer.<sup>2</sup>

That in hir cóp(pē ¶ ther wás no ferthyng sene (A. 134.)

What sholde he stúð(iē ¶ and máke himselven wood (A. 184.)

and similar verses are probably on the French model in which the atonic *-e* is not elided when the caesura is followed by a vowel.

Elision is of course impossible in

He was a shép(herde ¶ and nóght a mercenarie (A. 514.)

Why this a fán(tom, ¶ why thése oracles (*II. of Fame*, 11.)

the latter being a four-beat line from which Ten Brink (*op. cit.* § 300, note) would remove the difficulty by deleting the second *why*.

Hypercatalexis is probable before such marked pauses as in

That cruel sērp(ent. ¶ On mé | exercise not. (*Par. Lost*, x. 927.)

Away, fond wóm(an ! ¶ were he twen|ty times my son. (*Rich. II*, v. ii. 101.)

And particularly in drama, where there is a change of speaker:

Upon what sick(ness? ¶

*Brutus.*

Impá|tient ðf my ábsence (*J. Caes.* iv. iii. 152.)

so that the term 'dramatic caesura' is perhaps justified for these cases.

<sup>1</sup> The Lyric feminine caesura came after a weak syllable that was not hypermetrical.

<sup>2</sup> Ten Brink denies this, and would 'assume apocope, slurring, and elision to the same extent at the caesura as in other positions' (*Chaucer's Sprache*, § 307). On the contrary, the intervention of a pause is the very reason why elision does not take place to the same extent as in other positions.

Beth wár by this ensámplē ¶ óld and pláyn (B. 3281.)

Thanne hádde youre tálē ¶ ál be tóld in véyn (B. 3989.)

Furthermore he himself admits that 'a redundant syllable at the caesura after the model of the feminine caesura in the O. Fr. epos occurs without doubt in Lydgate and some later poets.'

In a well-known Miltonic line the pause is probably too light for the admission of a redundant syllable :

Créated húg<sup>o</sup>est that swím the Ócean stréam (*P. L.* i. 202.)  
and *-est that swim* is best taken as a substituted anapaest if we keep this reading instead of the original printing *th' Ocean*. The latter would have to be scanned with syllabic alternation :

Créated húg<sup>o</sup>|est thát | swím th' Óc<sup>1</sup>lean stréam<sup>2</sup>

Probably the latter reading should be kept, although of course Milton was at the mercy of his amanuensis, and unable to revise his own proofs.

Probable cases of two redundant syllables before the medial pause are :

O'erbéars your óff(icers. ¶) The rábble cáll him lórd (*Hamlet*, IV. v. 101.)  
The flúx of cóm(pany : ' ¶) anón a cáreless hérð. (*As You Like It*, II. i. 52.)

These hypermetrical syllables are, like feminine endings, justified because the pause facilitates the insertion of an extra syllable which does not interfere with the rhythm.

## XI

### VARIETY IN VERSE

§ 1. The conclusions gained up to this point may be summarized as follows. In English speech certain words or syllables naturally stand out above their neighbours in greater prominence, according to their mental importance. The basis of the primary rhythm of poetry is found when an intelligible succession of speech-sounds, thus varying in weight—both physical and mental—and in other respects, arranges itself in such a way that the relatively heavy syllables seem to mark the ends or beginnings of feet or measures equal in duration. From another point of view it may be said that an ictus or metrical beat constantly recurs at regular intervals, usually coinciding with the relatively heavy syllables.

In English verse the weight which marks both the mental importance of words and the rhythmical ictus is produced in general by a stress which consists largely in force of utterance and falls usually on a syllable long in quantity. This stress may vary in degree, but the arsis must be the heaviest syllable of its own foot.

✓ Feet may be filled partly by silence (compensatory pause) instead of sound-material, and the number of syllables cannot always be fixed absolutely. In any particular type of verse, however, a certain kind of filling-in predominates and may be regarded as the normal. Roughly speaking, the speed of the rhythmical movement is in direct ratio to the preponderance of light over heavy syllables.

Verse is always divided into larger equal or symmetrical units, viz. lines or verses, containing a definite number of feet. The ends of these may be regarded as normally marked by a pause (metrical pause). There are also the pauses which are naturally made in reading prose, pauses in the rhythmical flow corresponding with divisions in the sense. These sense-pauses may occur at any position within or at the end of the line, or both. In the latter event the final pause is heavy, but where there is no sense division at the end of the line the metrical pause tends to be overlooked or obscured, and the rhythm runs on or overflows.

✓ § 2. It is obvious, then, that there is much scope for variation in the filling-in and movement of the metre without violating the equal periodicity that is the basis of its rhythm. 'The essence of verse is regularity,' said Johnson, 'and its ornament is variety. To write verse is to dispose syllables and sounds harmoniously by some known and settled rule; a rule, however, lax enough to substitute similitude for identity, to admit change without breach of order, and to relieve the ear without disappointing it.'

Johnson, however, would give no specific explanations as to how this was to be accomplished; and his detailed criticisms show that he frequently forgot this admirably catholic principle, and betray his bondage to a syllabic scheme.

Hitherto attention has been concentrated rather on the aspect of uniformity in verse: the object of this chapter is to exhibit its manifold variety. Different methods of variation have been in vogue in different periods, amongst different poets, or at different stages of a poet's career.

§ 3. For purposes of analytic classification it may be convenient to take as the normal type of verse one with a certain number of syllables, and with a certain number of beats, each coinciding with every second or third syllable; and then register deviations from this type. The drawback of this method of exposition is that it does not bring out the regularity (which must be the basis of verse)

as well as the formal variety. To call a particular metre octosyllabic or decasyllabic may be extremely misleading, and the application of syllabic terminology, justifiable as it may be in some cases, to English verse in general is responsible for much misunderstanding. The foregoing chapters, however, should be sufficient guard against the danger of regarding cases where the beat falls on the third instead of the second syllable, or others similar, as violations rather than as variations. Equality of time-intervals must be recognized as the basis of verse-rhythm. The foot terminology may well be used in consonance with the principle of periodicity; and examples of diversity of rhythm may appear not so much as deviations from, as variations within, a rhythmical scheme.

'A verse', as J. A. Symonds said, 'may often have more than ten syllables, and more or less than five accents; but it must carry so much sound as shall be a satisfactory equivalent for ten syllables, and must have its accents so arranged as to content an ear prepared for five.'

§ 4. No one has asserted more charmingly the value of metrical variation. 'The secret of complex and melodious blank verse lies in preserving the balance and proportion of syllables, while varying their accent and their relative weight and volume, so that each line in a period shall carry its proper burden of sound, but the burden shall be differently distributed in the successive verses. This is done by sometimes allowing two syllables to take the time of one, and sometimes extending one syllable to the length of two, by forcing the accentuation of prominent monosyllables and gliding over successive liquid sounds, by packing one line with emphatic words so as to retard its movement, by winging another with light and hurried polysyllables, and by so adapting words to sense, and sense to rhythm, that pauses, prolongations, and accelerations, absolutely necessary for the understanding of the matter, evoke a cadence of apparently unstudied melody. In this prosody the bars of the musical composer, where different values from the breve to the demi-semiquaver find their place, suggest perhaps a truer basis of measurement than the longs and shorts of classic quantity.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Symonds has often been charged with anarchism. He is certainly anxious to emphasize the variety of fine verse, but these extracts show clearly his recognition of the uniformity which underlies it all. The orthodox scansion of 1874 deserved all he said of it.



An attempt to express the same idea was made some three centuries earlier by Gascoigne, who noted with regard to Chaucer 'that although his lines are not alwayes of one selfe same number of Syllables, yet beyng redde by one that hath understanding, the longest verse and that which hath most Syllables in it, will fall (to the eare) correspondent unto that whiche hath fewest sillables in it: and likewise that which hath in it fewest syllables shal be found yet to consist of woordes that have suche naturall sounde, as may seeme equall in length to a verse which hath many moe syllables of lighter accenttes' (*Certayne Notes of Instruction concerning the making of verse . . .*).

Many years were to pass, despite the practice of Marlowe and Shakespeare, before any other theorist showed such an insight into the chief way of achieving the combination of regularity and variation which English verse required.

§ 5. In speech-verse, and especially in dramatic blank verse, the looser rhythms of natural speech are continually counterpointed—to use analogically a term of music—upon the strict metrical rhythm; and occasionally the periodicity of the time-scheme is only approximately realized in the actual material rhythm, especially when the thought or emotion to be expressed is so insistent that the metrical isochronism has to give way before the overpowering rhetorical emphasis. But these actual departures from temporal uniformity must be only slight and must not be so frequent as to obscure the time-scheme.

The metrical stress, then, marks out for the mind a strict and definite rhythmical scheme; and the less regularly timed recurrences of the speech accent—syntactical and rhetorical—give variety without distinct violation. In order that by this compromise the rhythm may not be lost, a skilful poet usually takes great care to preserve the normal scheme most distinctly immediately before and after any places where it may appear doubtful. Particularly in the freer measures which have become more common since Coleridge set the example, it is noteworthy that in those verses of good poets where the number of syllables differs much from the standard, the ictus is generally made to coincide with unmistakable speech-stresses, and that, on the other hand, where the arsis is notably weak the line is for the nonce made syllabically regular, or the preceding and succeeding beats are so unmistakable that the ictus can be located without doubt. The rhythm being thus firmly

established, the mind has no difficulty in placing every beat, despite the occasional failure of the ictus to coincide with a full speech accent, and the verse is saved from disintegration.

If then in Marlowe, or Shakespeare, or Milton, each line gives a general five-foot iambic effect, it produces this in different ways. The best verse, as Leigh Hunt said, modulates its language 'on the principle of variety in uniformity'. It combines oneness and variety; 'oneness, that is to say, consistency, in the general impression, metrical and moral; and variety, or every pertinent diversity of tone and rhythm, in the process. . . . Variety in versification consists in whatever can be done for the prevention of monotony by diversity of stops and cadences, distribution of emphasis, and retardation and acceleration of time; for the whole real secret of versification is a musical secret.'

§ 6. The remainder of this chapter will give a résumé of the specific methods of variation from a theoretic normal.

A. The *theoretic normal* of English heroic verse is a five-foot iambic line; i.e. a verse in rising rhythm which has five feet, each containing two syllables. The ictus therefore usually falls on every second syllable.

The Góds | who líve | at éase, | where Í | shall reígn  
And nóne | or féw | to scáre | or chásé | the béast  
And swíms, | or sínks, | or wádes, | or créeps, | or flíes.

Here, and also in lines like

Say fírst | of Góð | abóve | or mán | belów

the foot division does not occur within a word. These are examples of *diaeresis*: the movement of the verse is a little more jerky and inclined to a *staccato* effect than where there is no diaeresis, for if the foot division does not coincide with a phonetic division but falls within a word, the feet are phonetically more continuous and the rhythm smoother.

Sonór|ous mēt|al blów|ing mār|tial sóunds  
Or foun|tain sóme | belát|ed pēas|ant sēes  
A thóus|and dēm|i-góds | on góld|en sēats.

Experiments have shown an indubitable tendency to make a slight pause after a rhythmical group or foot; this, however, is nullified when the foot-division is within a word. Even, therefore, when strict syllabic uniformity is preserved, a variation in movement is possible.

§ 7. (a) *Syllabic number.*

(i) *Omission of a syllable*, resulting in a *monosyllabic foot*, the missing syllable being replaced by an equivalent interval of silence (compensatory pause).

(a) *Omission of thesis.*

And scōrn the stōry thāt the knīght | ^tōld.

^Twēn|ty bōokes clād in blāk and rēde

'Gainst my captivity. | ^Hāil, | brave friend.

In the first example the pause is purely compensatory, but in the remaining examples there is also a pause for other reasons (suspensory pause). The purely compensatory pause is not infrequent in lyric verse, e.g.

Thy brōther Dēath | ^cāme | and crīed

but in heroic verse it is rare save in combination with trisyllabic substitution (see below), and in either case occurs most commonly in connexion with a metrical (suspensory) pause.

(β) *Omission of arsis.* Occasionally a syllable is dropped from the place in which an ictus should fall (always at a metrical pause):

That shē did gīve | me, ^ | whose pōsy wās

You hāve not sōught | it. ^ | How. cōmes it thēn

(γ) *Omission of a whole foot* occasionally occurs in drama:

He's tā'en; | — ^ | and hārk! | they shōut for jōy

(ii) *Additional unstressed syllables*, i.e. disyllabic thesis, making an anapaest instead of an iamb:

'Tis dōne already, and the mēss|enger gōne

I mūst not sūffer thīs; yet 'tīs | but the lēes.

This, however, is not so common in the fifth foot as in other parts of the line.

This *trisyllabic substitution* is very common, but in Milton's *Paradise Lost* it is confined almost exclusively to instances where no harshness could result, i.e. to instances where two vowel sounds come together or are separated only by a liquid consonant, or similar cases, so that phonetically elision is possible. In point of euphony these are the most satisfactory cases.

For still they knew, and ought | to have stīll | remembered.

(*Paradise Lost.*)

The friv|olous bôlt | of Cupid; Gods and men (*Comus*.)

A foil'd circul|itous wân|derer: till | at last (*Sohrab and Rustum*.)

Cases of four-syllabled feet are also found, but are more frequent in lyric verse, particularly in the lighter kinds.

(iii) *Combined trisyllabic and monosyllabic substitution* of course leaves the total number of syllables unaltered:

^ Hêre | is your hûs|band; lîke a mîldew'd êar,  
For one restráint, | ^ lôrds | of the wôrld | besides  
A mînd | ^ nôt | to be chánged | by time or place  
Affection? pooh! you speak | like a grêen | ^ gîrl,  
Proán'd | ^ fîrst | by the sêr(pent,¶) by hîm | ^ fîrst.

In the last three examples the pause is purely compensatory; but this variation occurs more often at a sense-pause, whether initial or medial. Similarly quadrisyllabic feet are combined:

To thread the pôst|ern of a smáll | ^ nêed|le's eye

(b) *Hypermetrical syllables*.

(i) *Final*. At the end of the line—*feminine* or *double endings*:—

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good moth(er),  
So have I heard and do in part believe (it

Lines with two redundant syllables might of course be claimed as alexandrines:

My lord, I came to see your father's fun(eral).

(ii) *Medial*. Possibly at the medial pause when very pronounced (*feminine caesura*):—

To mǎke them rǎnk(er.¶) Forgíve me thís my vír(tue

(iii) *Extra foot*. In eighteenth-century poetry an *alexandrine* or verse of six feet or twelve syllables was regarded as one of the few legitimate variations of heroic verse.

And like a wounded snake drags its slow length along.

(c) *Degree of weight*.

In the first of the following lines

O me, my King, let pass whatever will,  
^ Elves, | and the hǎrm|less glǎm|our ôf | the fîeld;  
3        o        o        2        o        2        o        1        o        2

the stresses are normal and regular. In the second line, however, *elves* is much heavier than any other arsis, and *of* is much lighter.

Although there is a little more stress on *of* than on *our*, the difference in weight is not so marked as between the thesis and arsis of the other feet. A similar variation in the weight of the arsis marks

His mīnistērs of vēngeance and pursūit  
And wāllow'd in the gārdens òf the kīng

On the other hand

For Hóť, Córd, Móist, and Drý, fów chāmpions f'ierce  
Rócks, cáves, lákes, fēns, bógs, dēns, and shādes of dēath  
And thrice thréefóld the gātes; thrée fólds were bráss  
Fēw | but áll bráve, | ^ áll | of óne mīnd | with hīm  
2     0     1     2             2     0     1     2             0     2

are remarkably heavy lines and slow in movement.

Tennyson in the *Passing of Arthur* shows his mastery of this method of variation:

And éver and anón with hóst to hóst  
0     2     0     1     0     2     0     2     0     2  
Shócks, and the splīntering spéar, the hārd máil hēwn.  
3     0     0     2     0     0     2     0     2     2     3  
Shíeld-bréakings, and the clāsh of bránds, the crāsh  
2     3     0             1     2     0     2             0     3

The first is a comparatively light line. In the second, *mail* is nearly as heavy as *hewn*, and is heavier than any other thesis in the line. This, with the emphatic *shocks*, makes a very strong line. In the third line the heavy first foot is to a certain extent isolated by the following light foot, but the total result is heavier than the normal.

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow,  
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder

are two other striking examples of this quality of strength.<sup>1</sup>

Lightness of the first arsis has generally a poor effect, as it makes the opening rhythm somewhat indecisive; it is not common in the greater poets.

(d) *Speed*. In general a heavy or strong line is slower in movement than a light one. *Ceteris paribus*, the verse will be more rapid in proportion as its light or unstressed syllables outnumber the heavy or stressed syllables. Free trisyllabic substitution in iambic verse therefore increases its speed, because obviously when two syllables are put in the time of one they must be hurried over.

<sup>1</sup> Weak and light endings in dramatic blank verse are important as helping the overflow of rhythm from one verse to the next, since they are words on which the voice cannot dwell.

The s<sup>o</sup>und of m<sup>an</sup>|y a h<sup>ea</sup>v|ily g<sup>al</sup>l|oping h<sup>oo</sup>f<sup>1</sup>  
Smote on her ear, and turning round she saw. (TENNYSON.)

Fl<sup>é</sup>d | like a gl<sup>it</sup>ter|ing r<sup>iv</sup>|ulet t<sup>o</sup> | the t<sup>ár</sup>n. (*ib.*)

A still better example is from Coleridge's *Christabel*:

The <sup>o</sup>ne red l<sup>ea</sup>f, the l<sup>ás</sup>t | of its cl<sup>án</sup>,  
That d<sup>án</sup>ces as <sup>ó</sup>ft|en as d<sup>án</sup>ce | it c<sup>án</sup>,  
H<sup>án</sup>g|ing so l<sup>í</sup>ght | and h<sup>án</sup>g|ing so h<sup>í</sup>gh,  
On the t<sup>óp</sup>|most tw<sup>í</sup>g | that looks úp | at the sk<sup>y</sup>.

A preponderance of liquid consonants also contributes to rapidity, for these allow the verse to run smoothly and easily. An accumulation of explosives impedes the flow, as in Butler's

He that hangs or beats out's brains (*Hudibras*.)

and in two lines quoted by Leigh Hunt:

Only the firmest and the constant'st hearts  
God sets to act the stout'st and hardest parts.

(e) *Smoothness*. Johnson in one of his *Rambler* papers noted that for verse to be 'melodious and pleasing it is necessary not only that the words be so ranged as that the accent may fall on its proper place, but that the syllables themselves be so chosen as to flow smoothly into one another. This is to be effected by a proportionate mixture of vowels and consonants, and by tempering the mute consonants with liquids and semi-vowels.' Such a line would be Tennyson's

And over them the tremulous isles of light

where there is no special emphasis or consonantal blockage.

The eighteenth century tended to exaggerate the importance of smoothness. We may, of course, legitimately expect a verse to be smooth, without some good reason for the contrary; but artistically a rough or harsh verse may be justifiable.

There are innumerable varieties of effect that may be produced by a skilful poet from the varieties of quality in individual sounds, but these are not primarily structural and need not be discussed here.

(f) *Pause*.

(i) *Final pause*. There is theoretically a pause at the end of each verse to mark the unit of secondary rhythm. When this coincides with a pause marking a division in the sense—the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum*, where the unbroken dactylic rhythm contributes largely to the galloping effect.

end of a sentence, clause, or even a phrase—the metrical pause is strongly marked :

Unknown thou art ; yet thy fierce vaunt is vain.  
Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man !  
No ! Rustum slays me, and this filial heart.  
For were I matched with ten such men as thee,  
And I were that which till to-day I was,  
They should be lying here, I standing there.

(Arnold, *Sohrab and Rustum*, 541-6.)

In some poets, however, the verse frequently ends in the middle of a phrase or clause. In that case the metrical pause is obscured by the close syntactical continuity between the end of one verse and the beginning of the next. When sense and rhythm thus run on or overflow from one line into another, and the sense-divisions fall mainly within the line, the whole movement of the verse-paragraph is different.

When Arthur reach'd a field of battle bright  
With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the world  
Was all so clear about him, that he saw  
The smallest rock far on the faintest hill.

(Tennyson, *Coming of Arthur*, 95-8.)

A more striking specimen of overflowing blank verse will be found in the opening lines of *Paradise Lost*. Keats in the opening of *Endymion* gives an equally pronounced example in rimed heroic verse.

It is also noticeable that feminine endings tend to obscure the pause, by filling it up with sound :

And though he came our enemy, remem(ber  
He was paid for that ; though mean and mighty, rott(ing  
Together, have one dust, yet reverence,  
That angel of the world, doth make distinct(ion  
Of place 'tween high and low. (*Cymbeline*, IV. ii.)

Light and weak endings, too, imply a syntactical continuity between one line and the next.

(ii) *Medial pause*. Some poets follow the metrical convention of placing a *caesura* or metrical pause as near as possible to the middle of the line, i. e. after the second foot or after or in the middle of the third foot, as in the passage above from Arnold, or in any passage from Pope. Puttenham, for example, laid down the law that 'the meeter of ten sillables . . . must have his *Cesure* fall upon the fourth sillable', and this was the strict rule in the Old French epic metre.

Others, however, freely vary the position of the internal pause,

and make their sense-divisions or breaks at any place in the line. Most frequently, of course, the break tends to fall in the middle, but it is by no means uncommonly found earlier or later in the line.

When the wild peasant rights himself, || the rick  
 Flames, || and his anger reddens in the heavens . . .  
 Breathing and sounding beauteous battle, || comes  
 With the air of the trumpet round him, || and leaps in . . .  
 He heard the deep behind him, || and a cry  
 Before, || His own thought drove him like a goad.

(g) *Relation between metrical units and speech-units.* Besides variety in the metrical form itself, we have also to consider the unceasing variety in the relation between metrical units and the speech-units which depend on phonetic and syntactical or rhetorical conditions. The varying position of the sense-pauses is one manifestation of this—sometimes coinciding with the metrical pause which marks the units of secondary rhythm, sometimes so frequently falling within the line at different places as to set up a rhetorical grouping which threatens to neutralize and supersede the metrical grouping.

But actual speech may also be divided into other units regardless of its character as verse; e.g. it may be analysed by reference to 'monopressures' into groups of one, two, or three syllables produced by one jet of breath; and these groups sometimes coincide with the feet which are the units of primary rhythm and sometimes overlap and are at variance with them. Professor Skeat represents the monopressures of Chaucer's line

That-fro the-tymē || that he-first bigan  
 Al bismot'red || with his-haber . geoun  
 —                      —                      —

whereas the units of primary rhythm or feet are respectively:

That fró | the tȳm|ē thàt | he first | bigán  
 Al | bismót|'red with | his háb|ergeoun.

Again, syllables may be grouped around the primarily stressed syllables to which they are naturally joined in actual uttered speech:

The thúnder | of the trúmpets | of the níght

These two methods do not produce the same groups: but the point is that these are phonetic groupings which sometimes coincide with feet and at other times do not.

§ 8. With regard to the scansion of lines that are doubtful, it must



be realized that metre is a specific arrangement of certain material, sound and silence, in harmony with rhythmic law. This harmony must be actual if not apparent, real if not obvious. Rhythm does not necessitate any uniform syllabic arrangement, such as a strict alternation of light and heavy, and one cannot therefore assume that any one scheme will be exhibited by a particular line. But in good verse the fall of the chief beats will mark out the main lines of the rhythm so that the music of the verse arises out of a natural reading. Sometimes, of course, only by considerable straining can the words be set to any rhythmical scheme, but usually, in absence of special artistic or rhetorical purposes, the excellence of an individual verse, *qua* verse, is in inverse ratio to the amount of coercion required. The skilful writer chooses and orders his words in such a way that on the whole they suggest and bring out the rhythm unmistakably, and require a minimum of adjustment. If he does this he can then with greater effect introduce verses where the rhythm is less obvious, and where the sounds and silences do require deliberate adjustment, and even coercion, if the rhythm is to be preserved. The whole poetic value of such lines depends on their being made to fit into the rhythmical scheme.

We have, of course, to be continually prepared for slight discrepancies between the regular time-beat of the ideal rhythm and the mobile stresses of actual speech; but the great poets rarely let them diverge so far as to cause perplexity. The actual sound of the verse as it is naturally read must in general suggest the main lines of the rhythm; and it must be remembered that a verse cannot always be judged in isolation from the rhythmical series of which it forms a part, any more than the value of a syllable can be estimated apart from the neighbouring syllables of the group or phrase in which it is embedded.

¶ § 9. Again, the phonetic grouping of sounds is not by any means a certain guide to the metrical division; verse is governed, not by phonetic law, but by metrical law; and while in poets with the finest technique there will be no violation, the phonetic qualities of words will occasionally have to accommodate themselves to the metrical scheme. Phonetics, music, rhetoric—however closely connected metric may be with these, it has its own being and its own laws.

It has also to be remembered that different theories have influenced the technique of verse at different epochs, and that at all times

differences in kind, e.g. between drama and lyric, are naturally expressed by differences in method.

Further scope for variation in the arrangement of stanzas, and in the irregular lengths of lines and paragraphs in *vers libres* and blank verse, is indicated in Part II.

## XII

### THE SYLLABIC THEORY OF VERSE

§ 1. Poe maintained that poetic rhythm depended on the recognition of more or less complex equalities. There is, of course, a subtle pleasure given by complexity itself when an underlying equality or unity is grasped. But complexity has its dangers, and in an age which loves external orderliness and regularity the simpler forms of equality are more favoured, just as they are in the earliest stages of conscious technique. The simplest form of rhythm is obviously one where the temporal equality is equivalent to a numerical equality such as might be represented by the series  $xa \mid xa \mid xa \mid xa \mid xa$ , where the component elements are alternately weak and strong.

§ 2. A syllabic type of verse, i.e. verse which depends on enumeration of syllables, came into English poetry from French verse, in which the length of the lines was determined strictly by the number of their syllables, and partly too under the direct influence of the Latin Church hymns of the early Middle Ages, the most popular forms of which often showed a regular alternation of weak and strong syllables as well as a strict observance of syllabic limits. In French, so dominant was the syllabic idea that where the exigencies of the language prevented conformity to the rule, special legislation had to declare what syllables need not be counted in the verse, such as so-called atonic syllables at the caesura or end of the line, and syllables capable of elision.

In proportion as the speech-stresses of a language were weak, as in French, it was the more necessary to preserve syllabic regularity. But the transplantation of this verse system into a language of strong speech stresses naturally resulted in a type of verse in which the accented and unaccented syllables tended to alternate regularly, as they did frequently in the Low Latin hymns; for, so

long as the number of syllables was fixed (an extra weak one being allowed only at the end of a verse, or at the caesura), the stress had to fall with syllabic regularity in the majority of cases.

§ 3. One of the greatest exponents of the order-loving eighteenth century tells how he 'lisp'd in numbers', and how 'most by numbers judge a poet's song'. It is significant that this word, meaning verse and its elements, should have been used so much at a time when rhythm was regarded—in theory at least—as numerical in character. Sidney's phrase, 'that numbrous kinde of writing which is called verse', suggests the same arithmetical idea; and he says later that modern verse observes 'onely number (with some regarde of the accent) . . .' Webbe says that English poetry is 'framed in wordes contayning number or proportion of just syllables', and elsewhere speaks of an 'equal number of syllables' as characterizing our usual verse (*Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. Gregory Smith, pp. 248, 266). Puttenham, too, regards the number of syllables as the basis of English verse; verse to the Greeks and Latins 'consisteth in the number of their feete; and with us in the number of sillables' (*Art of English Poesie*, Ch. iii).

§ 4. In extenuation of their narrow views it may be urged that Sidney, Webbe, and Puttenham had all written their treatises before any of Shakespeare's plays had appeared; the two former before even *Tamburlaine* had threatened the world with high astounding terms. The 'drumming decasyllabon', probably represented their ideas of workmanlike verse.

Nevertheless, Gascoigne as early as 1575 could lament 'that commonly now a dayes . . . we use none other but a foot of two sillables'; and could point out that Chaucer's lines 'are not alwayes of one selfe same number of Syllables'. And by the end of Shakespeare's life, syllabic limits were so freely set at nought in dramatic blank verse that liberty had become licence. The remedy applied was a stringent observation of syllabic principles, again encouraged considerably by French example and precept.

In French syllabic verse, while units of secondary rhythm (lines) were very definitely fixed, the primary rhythm within the line was largely indeterminate.<sup>1</sup> In English a definite secondary rhythm

<sup>1</sup> In the *vers decasyllabe* the accents might be four or five, in the alexandrine they varied still more (generally from four to six).

was restored by fixing the length of the line in syllabic terms. This process, since English verse is fundamentally regular with regard to the number of feet or of metrical stresses in each line, also reduced to order the internal lawlessness which was developed in Jacobean dramatic verse. Not only were hypermetrical syllables prohibited, but trisyllabic feet were banned in theory, and in practice were admitted only where they could under a metrical fiction be explained away by assuming elision, or in conjunction with monosyllabic feet, so that the total number was unchanged.

§ 5. This is reflected in the theories of Bysshe and Johnson. In 1702 Bysshe's *Art of Poetry* declared that 'the structure of our verses consists in a certain number of syllables', and obviously desiderated alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables. Dr. Johnson explicitly laid down that 'the accents are to be placed on even syllables', and every line, considered by itself, is harmonious in proportion as this rule is strictly observed.

In a paper in the *Rambler* (No. 86) he declared that the heroic measure is only pure 'when the accent rests upon every second syllable through the whole line', as in

Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights  
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings.

This would be wearisome if sustained, and therefore 'some variation of the accents is allowed'; though this 'always injures the harmony of the line, considered by itself'.

Johnson of course had to admit that most of Milton's verses were not 'pure'; even he, however, did not say that they were mostly inharmonious, although several fine lines are so branded. Pope's lines, indeed, are not strictly alternating. In fact, as Mr. Omond insists, 'no English poet (unless Glover deserve the name) ever sanctioned by his practice this monstrous canon, which owes its conception and promulgation to grammarians alone. So artificial and unreal had our theoretic prosody become' (*English Metrists*, pp. 55-6). Although the syllabic system undoubtedly involves a tendency to alternation it does not necessitate such a law.

The extent to which the syllabic idea has influenced English theories of metre, even up to the present time, may be gauged by the still frequent use of such terms as octosyllabic or decasyllabic verse.

§ 6. Milton was the greatest poet who held to the theory of syllabism. He felt the necessity of freedom, and so did actually introduce extra syllables, though in *Paradise Lost* it was always in

cases where phonetic elision was possible ;<sup>1</sup> or else the total number of syllables remained unchanged because a three-syllabled foot was accompanied by a monosyllabic foot.<sup>2</sup> But in actual practice Milton was guided by a fine metrical feeling, though this had to work within certain limits imposed by himself; and these verses are good because, with pleasant and significant differences in movement, they preserve the rhythm and do not break it; in other words, because they can be scanned as cases of combined substitution, and when read accordingly give aesthetic satisfaction. In his earlier and later verse he claims greater freedom as to the number of syllables.

§ 7. The full importance of the syllabic idea could be brought out satisfactorily only in an historical survey of English verse. It is, however, necessary to point out here how it may throw light on the scansion of doubtful lines in syllabic verse which seems to have been written under the influence of the alternating idea. In Glover, for example, typical lines are :

Thy árm | is grówn | enérv|ate, and | would sínk  
Whlch bút | on fěw | his spár|ing hánd | bestóws ;

and, after these, such lines as

Whò háve | compélléd my fréeborn hánd to chángé  
Whý this | astónishmént on évery fáce

are comparatively easy to accept, and probably

Whlch ón | my yóúth have prýed ; relénting ónce

is to be so scanned ; and possibly Glover would have scanned

Gránt Í | may béar my búckler tò the fiéld

Similarly

‘He wíll,’ replíes the bróther in a glów, . . .  
‘Hé wíll | permít | me tò | compléte | by déath  
The measure of my duty, will permit  
Me tò | achíeve a sérvíce, whlch no hánd  
But mine can render . . .

and avenge the shame

Of àn enslávéd Lacónian.

But this conventional stress in the first foot is always a weakness in heroic verse. When it comes between two normal feet the rhythmic adjustment is easily made, and an imaginary beat supplied instinctively; but the line must be started decisively and unmistakably.

<sup>1</sup> For the elision fiction see Ch. V, §§ 3-8.

<sup>2</sup> This latter mode of escape from the supposed law of alternation has been explained away by many nineteenth-century metrists by the theory of trochaic substitution, or of pyrrhic and spondee.

The alternating theory is not very skilfully put into practice in Johnson's own verse :

And fòr | a móment lúll the sênce of wõe.  
Of áll the gríefs that hárrass thè | distréssed  
Sure the most bitter is a scornful jest.

*The* in the second line is too insignificant to support even an imaginary ictus, especially after an arsis so short as *har-*; and in the third line it is still weaker because of its position between two syllables with rhetorical accent. In fact the line is difficult to scan satisfactorily on any principle, for *bitter* is too short to support an accent stronger than that on the emphatic *most*, such as is necessary to attract the ictus, as in

Súre | the móst bítt|er is | a scòrnful jést

especially as the succeeding arsis *is* is also light. A heavier word than *bitter* would have made the verse better as verse, the emphatic *most* setting up an effective counterclaim, but not strong enough to attract the ictus to itself. Again, although with most poets the adversative force of *yet* would indicate the scansion

^ Yét | when the sênce | of sacred presence fires

would Johnson have scanned

Yet wén | the sênce | ?

Similarly with

Hard is his lot that, here by Fortune plac'd

Milton was no slave to the alternating scheme, but his departures from it are generally so marked and so clearly made for the sake of emphasis, that in doubtful cases, where no special significance is at stake, an alternating scansion may perhaps be preferred as such.

Sáy, Hêavenly Múse, | that, òn | the sê|cret tópp  
That with | no middle flíght inténds to sóar.

In the latter verse *with* is rather too light for the first ictus, which should be decisive and unmistakable; but *that* is also lacking in the weight and emphasis which a monosyllabic foot demands, while the shortness of *middle* would hardly support the strong ictus which a trisyllabic foot requires. In another type of line too it is not alone the alternating idea, but also, and in fact more, the question of balance that decides. This is preserved by stressing *our* in

Irréconcíleablè, | to óur | gránd fõe,

which has a slow and deliberate dignity, whereas

Irréconcíleablè, to our gránd | ^ fõe,

would give a continuous run of four light syllables. On the other hand, after a full ictus and a decisive pause the adversative force of *yet* makes it strong enough to stand alone in

As *óne* | *gréat fúr*|*nace flámed* ; | *^ yét* | from those *flámes*  
although it is not impossible to scan

| *yét fróm* | those *flámes*.

A place in the alternating scheme cannot of course convert a pair of syllables respectively heavy and light into light and heavy.

Mixed | with *ób*|*durate príde* |

or

Mixed | with *obdúr*|*ate príde* . . .

cannot become

Mixed with | *obdúr*|*ate príde* . . .

In Chaucer's verse alternation often decides the accent of such words as *nature*, *honour*, *vertu*, which sometimes retained their original French accent, and sometimes followed the English normal.

Of which *vertú* engendred is the flour

Sownynge in moral *vértu* was his speche

But such Miltonic lines as

And sat as Princes; whom | the Supreme King

In confused march | forlorn, the adventurous bands

do not necessitate adherence to an alternating scheme and the assumption of a fluctuating accent in these words, for the same sequence ( $\times \times \text{---} | \wedge \text{---}$ ) occurs with monosyllables at the end of other lines:

So clomb this first grand Thief | into Góð's  $\wedge$  fólð

And thence in Heaven called Sát|an, with bóld |  $\wedge$  wórd

The rest, in imitat|ion, to líke |  $\wedge$  árms

Among them he arrived, | in his ríght |  $\wedge$  hánd.

§ 8. If one could accept the theory advanced by Professor J. W. Bright that rise of pitch may be used to mark the metrical ictus instead of the natural stress of the English language, which physically is constituted by an increase of force, alternation might be accepted as a regular accompaniment of syllabic verse. But the availability of pitch-accent for the marking of ictus could not be admitted in the case of non-syllabic verse, for the result would be far greater uncertainty than now. It is not necessary in syllabic verse, and no conclusive proof in its support has yet been put forward. Moreover, there is a certain theoretic objection to assuming an alternative means of marking the ictus. Finally,

against the pitch-accent theory must be placed the assertion made by Mr. H. Woodrow, after experimental investigation, that pitch alone in place of intensity is incapable of producing any perceptible rhythm (*Psych. Rev.*, vol. xviii, No. 1).

§ 9. A very interesting set of cases may be found in verses like *Par. Lost*, i. 406, 735, ii. 132, which show the so-called 'hovering stress'. In the absence of directly conclusive evidence as to the actual pronunciation, this point is still more or less debatable.

hope never comes  
That comes to all, but torture without end  
might be scanned with a pause before *end*,  
but tor|ture with|out | ^ *end*.

To preserve alternation we should have to give a very even delivery, the last three syllables being pronounced slowly and deliberately, so that, as the two syllables of *without* would have nearly the same prominence, the fact that *with* occurred in the place where the ictus might normally be expected would be sufficient to justify the scansion

tor|ture with|out *end*.

(For other examples see Ch. VIII, § 12.) But this expedient has, I think, not yet been proved necessary.

§ 10. It is of course in connexion with the syllabic system that the theory of elision becomes important, for apparent deviations from the normal number of syllables are assumed to be explained away thereby. In reality these are simply cases where greater attention is paid to the smooth flow of sounds, cases, therefore, where a combination of syllabic variety and temporal regularity is achieved most easily and with the least jarring effect. Elision is only a fiction; there need be no actual clipping in pronunciation.

§ 11. It will be seen, then, that the syllabic theory in its best form is hardly more than a limitation set upon the freedom of natural rhythm, with different degrees of necessity at different stages of literary history. Its effect is astringent; it tightens up the metrical form when it has become loose and is in danger of breaking up. The secondary rhythm which is so essential is made more unmistakable, while the primary rhythm is kept nearer to a uniform standard, though still not debarred from considerable variety. The danger was that what had to great poets like Milton been merely a self-imposed regulative principle, to set a check on structural



laxity like that of the Jacobean drama, became elevated into a positive and fundamental law. But poets must ordinarily utilize the material afforded by natural speech rhythms, and Coleridge, in theory and in practice, recalled one of the obvious features of our older native verse, which was constantly present in genuine ballads, namely, disregard of strict syllabic number. His vindication of the importance of the beats instead of the number and alternation of syllables was not faultlessly expressed,<sup>1</sup> and led to some confusion of idea; but by breaking down conventions that were no longer necessary, and at best had only a negative, restrictive value, he made the way clear for recognition of the temporal basis of verse and the discovery or recovery of many free and beautiful rhythms which deepened and widened the whole range of poetic expression.

### XIII

#### SONG-VERSE AND SPEECH-VERSE

§ 1. In the application of metrical principles to English verse no distinction has yet been made between different ideal types of poetry, save for occasional warnings that in some cases the isochronism of the primary rhythm might be only approximate. But it is plain that rhythmical precision *may* be found in varying degrees in actual verse, and that different factors may be more or less prominent in different poets or types of poetry. Shelley's *To a Skylark* and Shakespeare's *Henry V* are both written in verse of a high order, but they are felt by all to be at the opposite poles of verse and hardly within the same sphere of jurisdiction.

§ 2. Poetry obviously occupies a position between music and prose speech. If we conceive of ideal poetry as lying exactly midway, there would, of course, be varieties tending more in one direction than in the other. The Greeks regarded melic or lyric poetry, i. e. poetry intended to be sung, as of a kind quite different from poetry composed for recitation. This distinction, which in the most primitive poetry had probably not emerged, is also

<sup>1</sup> 'The metre of the *Christabel* is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle: namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four' (*Preface* to the edition of 1816).

suggested by the meaning of *epos* or *saga*—‘something said’—as differentiated from what was sung. Again, the original bard was *ἀοιδός*, ‘a singer’.<sup>1</sup>

§ 3. These two kinds of verse are to be distinguished also in Modern English poetry. The kind nearer to music tends to conceive of verse as dominated by the metrical sound-scheme and the melodic effect. The other kind, nearer to prose speech, is dominated by the sense or thought-scheme. There is, of course, no hard and fast division between song-verse and speech-verse; they shade into each other by almost imperceptible degrees. But Shelley, for instance, in his lyric poetry thinks more of words as sound-material for the song that will suggest his emotion than most poets do, and less as a means of exact expression for his thought. Mr. Symons said of a more modern lyricist, Ernest Dowson, that ‘a song for him was music first, and then whatever you please afterwards, so long as it suggested, never told, some delicate sentiment’. Wordsworth, on the other hand, rarely has the singing quality; while Swinburne is before all things a genuine singer. But there is probably only one poet who rivals Shelley in this way; and he in other respects is much less great. ‘There are poems of Verlaine’, says Mr. Symons, ‘which go as far as verse can go to become pure music, the voice of a bird with a human soul. . . . He knows that words are living things, which we have not created. They transform themselves for him into music, colour, and shadow. They serve him with so absolute a self-abnegation that he can write *romances sans paroles*, songs almost without words, in which scarcely a sense of the interference of human speech remains.’ Verlaine’s poetry was in truth at the very opposite pole to rhetoric, and deliberately so. In lyrical verse,

<sup>1</sup> Historical investigation has shown that the earliest poetry was nearly always sung; as a later development came epic poetry in which the song element was more or less disregarded, as interest in great heroes or semi-divine personages took the form, not of mere allusion in eulogistic hymns, but of actual narration of their deeds. See Gummere’s *Beginnings of Poetry*, adding to his materials *Iliad* xviii. 569-72 (of lyric), and *Odyssey* viii. 260 et seq. (of narrative poetry), as quoted in Ch. II above. The verse of *Beowulf* was apparently meant to be recited and not to be sung. The song element doubtless was no more than a rough chant; but however this may be, it is certain that at a later stage ballads and lays were produced in the closest connexion with music, and *Beowulf* itself (e.g. l. 1065) gives evidence of this practice at a very early date.

says Mr. Symons elsewhere, ' words are used by rhythm as notes in music, and at times with hardly more than musical meaning '.

§ 4. Between the extremes of pure music on the one hand and of speech-verse, as in drama and satire<sup>1</sup>, on the other, there is, of course, great difference in the degree in which rhythm dominates the sound-material; in the former it is absolute, in the latter it may frequently be regular, but sometimes it is only approximate.

As Helmholtz observed, ' whereas in poetry the construction of the verse serves only to reduce the external accidents of linguistic expression to artistic order; in music, rhythm, as the measure of time, belongs to the inmost nature of expression. Hence also a much more delicate and elaborate development of rhythm was required in music than in verse ' (*Sensations of Tone*, Eng. trans., p. 388). This doubtless refers primarily to speech-verse; but the antithesis is too sharp. The first statement is applicable to the greater part of our poetry, but in all true poetry, as well as in music, rhythm certainly does belong to the inmost nature of expression.

↓ § 5. In verse of every kind, however, there must be at work two distinct and often conflicting tendencies. Even within the same type the balance may be constantly changing in favour of one or the other, the instinctive rhythmic tendency or the acquired normal utterance of habitual speech; but in general the rhythmic tendency dominates in song and lyric verse, which is nearer to music, more obviously than in speech-verse, where departures from natural pronunciation are less marked and comparatively rare.

In other words, while the ideal is for sense and sound to harmonize, if the two are in fact at variance, song-verse demands a sacrifice of sense to sound, requires our habitual accents and quantities to denaturalize themselves and submit to having an artificial pronunciation imposed on them, in order that they may acquire a new melodic value.

Edmund Gurney pointed out that the voice has two distinct faculties—utilitarian and artistic. It constitutes ' on the one hand a medium for the symbols of speech, and on the other a musical instrument which, when in perfection, may seem preferable to all others. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Horace calls his satires ' conversations ', *Sermones*: ' nisi quod pede certo differt sermoni, sermo merus ' (*Serm.* I. iv. 47-8). The original features of the Roman *satura* were its semi-dramatic character and its mixture of prose with rough and unpolished verse.

It may use *notes* in delivering the words it has to *say*, as a means of making them emphatic and widely audible; or it may use words in delivering the notes it has to *sing*, in order to avoid the inanity of using meaningless syllables' (*Power of Sound*, p. 452). These are, of course, the two extremes, and there are between them mean types of various degrees. In song—'the meeting-point of speech and music'—as the combination of pitch-ratios with time-ratios is the essence of all the endless combinations of melodic form, the voice was sure to break through the bounds imposed by the normal lengths of syllables. Music is absolute and accurate in the employment of both its factors; while words can yield themselves to these strict requirements without any loss of intelligibility. When, then, the power of appreciating more complicated melodic phrases had been developed, the voice would naturally not debar itself from delivering them by any sense of duty to the length of syllables natural in the normal delivery of speech. One syllable might be held for several notes, unimportant words and syllables might be held for as long a time as important ones, words might be repeated. Glaring reversals of natural verbal accents could be easily avoided; but while avoiding them the melodic rhythm might lift the words wholly into its own region, justifying the transformation of their flow by the inherent agreeableness of the resulting form' (*op. cit.* p. 456). In proportionate degree this is true of lyric verse; where, of course, the pitch-ratios are left to the discretion of the reader instead of being laid down definitely by the composer.

§ 6. Music, which was probably at first subordinate, afterwards dominated the words of songs. Milton in his sonnet 'to Mr. H. Lawes'—

Harry whose tuneful and well-measur'd song  
First taught our English musick how to span  
Words with just note and accent, not to scan  
With Midas ears, committing short and long;

To after age thou shalt be writ the man,  
That with smooth aire couldst humor best our tongue—

praises Lawes for doing what many evidently failed to do in setting poems to music, viz. preserving the natural accent of the words, and not allowing the music altogether to override the verse, as for instance by giving too long a note to a short syllable and vice versa.

Most of the lyrics of Burns were of course written to fit the

melodies of more or less well-known airs; but Burns usually took care not to allow himself to lose sight of natural word-values. Campion, one of the finest of the Elizabethan song-writers, both wrote his own words and composed his own music. His aim, however, was 'to couple words and notes lovingly together', recognizing both in theory and in practice that there were verses 'which we may call *Lyrical*, because they are apt to be soong to an instrument, if they were adorned with convenient notes' (*Observations*, ch. viii). He laid it down clearly that 'in joyning of words to harmony there is nothing more offensive to the eare then to place a long sillable with a short note, or a short sillable with a long note, though in the last the vowell often beares it out'. His verses were intended to be sung, and his contemporaries considered that never did lyrical strains more happily than his 'hit the moods and various veins of music' (Davies);<sup>1</sup> but although he does in his best work preserve the natural lengths and accents, in his earlier songs he occasionally allowed the musical form to override the metrical form. For example, the following pairs of lines from 'When Laura smiles' (*A Booke of Ayres*, No. ix) would hardly be recognized as correspondent without the musical setting:

But when she her eyes encloseth, blindnes doth appeare  
The chieftest grace of beautie, sweetelie seated there.

For she with her devine beauties all the world subdues,  
And fills with heav'nly spirits my humble muse.

And in the opening lines of the stanzas of No. x

Long have mine eies gaz'd with delight

his later care is not evident.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly

Woman to find man so true

<sup>1</sup> 'He wrote his words in order to set them himself; . . . and the contour of each melody is carefully devised, both in pitch and rhythm, to express the sense, throwing the important words into relief. He takes care, therefore, to bring the important words in each stanza into the same position in the line; and, as in Burns, each stanza corresponds not only in metrical rhythm, but in inner sense-rhythm to all the rest' (Mr. H. H. Child, *Camb. Hist. of Eng. Lit.*, iv, p. 112).

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Percival Vivian (*Camb. H. E. L.*, iv, p. 147) unnecessarily finds difficulty in two lines of No. xii:

Shall I come if I flie, my deare love, to thee?

She a priest, yet the heate of love truly felt.

These surely are exactly correspondent; there is nothing unnatural in giving *deare* an accent.

should correspond with

Which when after-ages view.

§ 7. The distinction can be made clear by observing some of the songs of Burns.

Oh my lúve's like a rēd, red rōse  
could in speech-verse be so scanned, but when we know that the line is symmetrical with

As faír art thōu, my bōnie lāss  
it is obvious that there are four feet, and that if the different stanzas were intended to fit the same air, the scansion may be

Oh mý luv'e's líke a rēd, red rōse.<sup>1</sup>  
So, too,

O wért thou in the cáuld ^ blást  
must be so scanned to correspond with

O wére I in the wíldest wáste.

The isochronism may be preserved entirely by the rest between *cauld* and *blast*, or in part by a further lengthening of the long syllable *cauld*. Song-verse claims the option of utilizing the latter method with considerable freedom, although in general the greatest satisfaction will result when it attends to the natural quantities and accents of its speech-material.

An interesting comparison may be made of the concluding lines of the stanzas in the song 'Ca' the Yowes to the Knowes'. What is the scansion of

My bonie dearie?

The second stanza gives an indication, but no certainty:

To the moon sae clearly;

but it is put beyond dispute by

Fáeries | dānce sae | chéery

and

Yé shall | bé my | dēarie.

The first two cases must be

Mý ^ | bōnie | dēarie  
Tò the | móon sae | cléarily.

The influence of the strictly musical scheme over the speech stresses is illustrated in the last two lines of

'Twas na her bonie blue e'e was my ruin;  
Fair tho' she be, that was ne'er my undoin';

<sup>1</sup> Unless 'Oh my love is like . . .' should prove to have better authority.

'Twas the déar smíle when náebódy did mínd us,  
'Twas the bewíatching, sweet, stówn glance o' kíndness,

which correspond with

Quéén shall she bē in my bōsom for éver.

In speech-verse the word *but* often receives stress on account of its antithetical force; but in 'O Willie brewed a peck o' maut' rhetoric does not decide the accentuation.

But bý my sóoth she'll wáit a wée

is therefore a possible scansion, as also is

He is the Kíng amáing us thrée,

both of which correspond with

And mōnie máy we hōpe to bē.

Again, in the first line of Herrick's *To Anthea* the principles of prose accentuation would give a stress to *Bid*, but the musical setting by J. L. Hatton demands the scansion

Bid mě to livé and Ĩ will líve.

Compare, too,

Bid mě despáir and Ĩ'll despáir  
Undér that Cýpress trée.

♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ |

In this composer's treatment of quantities it is noteworthy that the first eleven monosyllables are all made equal in time-length. In the second stanza *as* and *a* are as long as *heart* and *kind*, and *in* is half as long again as *whole* and *world*, *whole* and *world* being represented by quavers and *in* by a dotted quaver.

♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩

As ĩn the whóle wòrld thóu canst find.

Speech-verse cannot legitimately preserve isochronism by any such distortion of the natural proportions and values of words.

§ 8. This same general law must be applied to another set of instances. Speech-verse will provide many lines where the syllables which form the content of one foot would, if given their normal pronunciation as if in prose, naturally occupy a longer time than those of another foot. Now to indicate a decisive change of time-signature so as to produce equality of duration is possible in a predominantly musical treatment of the words, but such a device is

outside the scope of speech-verse, where the weight must reinforce the sense. Lines like

Brought death into the world and all our woe

would if they were formulated musically have to show many changes of time-signature; and it must be admitted that in speech-verse the isochronism or temporal periodicity is sometimes only approximate. Nevertheless isochronism, with modulation of weight, must be the basis; and the flexibility of language has usually enabled the great masters to make their deviations from the law so slight, and so justifiable on other artistic grounds, that it is really unnecessary and misleading to term 'irregular' so many of what are felt to be amongst their finest lines.

§ 9. Moore, like Burns, fitted most of his songs to already existing tunes, but he had a more complete command of technique and showed greater care in the choice of his words. Although in simple directness and intensity of passion Burns stands far above him, Moore had great metrical skill, and he had always, even when it might well have been absent, as in *Lalla Rookh*, the true singing quality. His skill shows itself in attention, firstly, to vocal qualities required by words that are to be sung, and, secondly, to the requirements of rhythm. To take the second point first, Moore is always careful to provide for the musical accents important words which are strong enough to carry the metrical beat even in reading, so that rhythm and sense reinforce each other, instead of, as so commonly happens in songs, diverging. Hardly ever in Moore does the accent fall on an insignificant word, such as a mere article or a conjunction or an unemphatic preposition, as in

Are heaped for the beloved's bed  
And leap into a trance;

the result is that his songs can be read as well as sung. Lover said that 'Moore is liable to be falsely read, when the ordinary accent is given to the reading'. This, however, is true of only two cases:

(i) Sometimes there is in a dactylic foot a heavy syllable in the place of a light one; which despite its valuable effect in the second place—giving an evenly continuous fall of stress as in

Avenging and | bright fall the | swift sword of | Erin

—is generally out of place in the third position, as in

And | gave all thy | chords to light, | freedom, and | song.



(ii) The double-stressed ending of such lines as

And his) wíld harp slúng behínd hím

| ǫ ǫ ǫ ǫ | ǫ ǫ ǫ

Was) sêť in the crówn of a stráńgér

| ǫ ǫ ǫ ǫ ǫ ǫ | ǫ ǫ ǫ

where in speech-tones this peculiar dragging cadence is not so easy.

It is true of course that Moore instead of deep emotion gives us diffuse sentiment, and even this is obvious rather than subtle and complex. But to the song as song this very diffuseness was a gain in so far as it meant that there was no rare or elusive feeling, no strained and condensed expression to distract the attention of the audience. The language of songs must be simple and direct; because words and phrases when sung with musical gradations of tone are not so immediately grasped by the hearer as words spoken at the natural pitch, and a listener will miss the sense of an ingeniously compressed or difficult phrase, or gain it only at the expense of missing what follows—he cannot take time for thought as a reader can. Similarly, too, complex and unusual feeling or thought will not lend itself to that direct and immediate apprehension which is necessary for the song-lyric.

§ 10. The requirements for vocalization are mainly phonetic. Words must be chosen in uttering which the singer can open his mouth. A good supply of open vowels is therefore a prime necessity, particularly for the syllables which receive accent. An examination of *Love's Young Dream* will show Moore's care in this respect; and the thin *i* of 'The minstrel boy to the war is gone' and the short *u* of 'Tis the last rose of summer' are compensated by resonant consonants like *m* and *n*. Thin and hard consonants like *f*, *p*, *k* and *s*, like thin, short vowels, cause a contraction of the air passage at some point or a closing of some vocal organ, which impoverishes the 'body' of the sound.

§ 11. These, however, are not primarily poetic considerations; more important for the poetic lyric are the melodic values of sounds, and it is by delicate perception of these values that poets like Shelley and Swinburne have been able to compensate so magnificently for the absence of musical accompaniment, and compose lyrics that 'sing themselves'. This depends partly on the qualities of individual sounds; one modern lyricist, for example, considered that the letter *v* was the most beautiful and could not be used too

often, although the song-writer might regard it as too thin. Liquid consonants are particularly pleasant in their effects; they furthermore offer no difficulties for vocalization, and, most important of all, they have unusual combinative qualities. There is hardly any better example of liquid melody than Herrick's *Cherry Ripe* (which was of course set to music), particularly in its fifth line:

Cherry ripe, ripe, ripe, I cry,  
Full and fair ones; come and buy.  
If so be you ask me where  
They do grow, I answer: There,  
Where my Julia's lips do smile,  
There's the land, or cherry-isle,  
Whose plantations fully show  
All the year where cherries grow.

A lyric expresses passion or tender feeling rather than thought; its language therefore is on a higher level of emotional pitch, and consequently rhythmic movements are admissible which would not be natural in speech-verse, such as the trochaic and dactylic. Furthermore, words or phrases may be repeated just because of their richness of tone and resonance, or of the delicate melody in them, which appears to echo the key-note of the whole, even when it is almost unmeaning, as, for example, 'Heigh, ho', and 'Hey, nonny, nonny', and 'Waly, waly', as well as

Merrily, merrily shall we live now.

No more, O never more.

Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying,

and the refrains of triolets, villanelles, and other forms, including the ballad as well as the ballade. Rime in fact gives to a lyric poem some of that resonance which is essential to a song; and gives it wings upon which to soar above the level of sober, rational speech. 'Rhyme', said Swinburne, 'is the native condition of lyric verse in English; a rhymeless lyric is a maimed thing, and halts and stammers in the delivery of its message. . . . To throw away the natural grace of rhyme from a modern song is a wilful abduction of half the power and half the charm of verse.'

So too Meredith: 'In lyrics the demand for music is imperative, and as quantity is denied to the English tongue, rimes there must be.' The reason may be questioned by some, but the conclusion is hardly disputable. Even in lyrics which have no regular rime or refrain the essential resonance is found internally in the form of

assonance or alliteration, more or less subtle and unobtrusive, or even of actual repetition. See for example the last dozen lines of Tennyson's 'Come down, O maid' in *The Princess*. Similar devices are used in Sir William Watson's *England my Mother*, reinforced by the obvious correspondences of the short-metred lines :

England my mother,  
Wardress of waters,  
Builder of peoples,  
Maker of men.

. . . . .

Lo, with the ancient  
Roots of man's nature  
Twines the eternal  
Passion of song.

Ever Love fans it,  
Ever Life feeds it;  
Time cannot age it,  
Death cannot slay.

Deep in the world-heart  
Stand its foundations,  
Tangled with all things,  
Twin-made with all.

. . . . .

Trees in their blooming,  
Tides in their flowing,  
Stars in their circling,  
Tremble with song.

God on His throne is  
Eldest of poets;  
Unto His measures  
Moveth the whole.

§ 12. Wordsworth in his 1815 *Preface* said that for the production of the *full* effect of lyrics 'an accompaniment of music is indispensable'; but for his own lyric verse he required 'as a substitute for the classic lyre or romantic harp' only an 'impassioned recitation'. This is an admission that a new set of conditions arises for lyric poetry that leaves the realm of the true song, which had been reopened by Burns and Moore; a poet has to create, by his melodious rhythm and impassioned treatment of a suitable lyric theme<sup>1</sup>, that 'medicated atmosphere' which produces in the reader an exalted mood in which the verse is accepted as something to be sung rather than spoken, something in which the normal intonations of language are easily modified at need.

Shelley's lyrical poems, even though not composed for musical setting, and though he had evidently no ear for musical tones, were dominated by this ideal of song. He made melodies of words, and therefore chose words which had fine and subtle melodic qualities, both combinative and individual. Yet it was hardly more in the external form than in the content that the melodic value of Shelley's song-verse showed itself; or, to be more exact, it was largely in the emotional intensiveness of the melodic materials that he used. Words were chosen for their emotional significance

<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered that rhythm may be both a cause and an effect, and also an intensifier of passionate feeling.

as much as for their strictly intelligible and explicit meaning, so that the metrical ictus often did not coincide with rhetorical or logical importance. Only thus could he have given expressive voice and form to the delicate shades of spiritualized feeling which characterized the imaginative experiences and aspirations in which he centred his life. And it is this which makes the effect of his own finest poetry, where form and spirit seem inseparable, so well expressed in the song :

Child of Light! thy limbs are burning  
Thro' the vest which seems to hide them  
As the radiant lines of morning  
Thro' the clouds ere they divide them;  
And this atmosphere divinest  
Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.

(*Prometheus Unbound.*)

It is poetry like this that best illustrates Coleridge's saying that 'verse is in itself a music, and the natural symbol of that union of passion with thought and pleasure, which constitutes the essence of all poetry'. Nevertheless for the very reasons mentioned, many of Shelley's lyrics, such as *To Night* and *To a Skylark*, are notable for the absence of metrical uniformity. An examination of the first lines of the different stanzas of the two poems named will show that the same exact formula will not serve: e. g.—

Swiftly walk over the western wave.  
Wrap thy form in a mantle gray.  
When I arose and saw the dawn.  
Thy brother death came and cried.  
Death will come when thou art dead.

In this respect, then, there is a great difference between Shelley and Moore, or even Campion or Burns. J. A. Symonds once 'asked an eminent musician . . . why Shelley's lyrics were ill-adapted to music', and in reply 'she pointed out how the verbal melody was intended to be self-sufficing; how full of complicated thoughts and changeful images the verse is, how packed with consonants the words are,<sup>1</sup> how the tone of the emotion alters, and how no one melodic phrase could be found to fit the daedal woof of the poetic emotion'. In truth a musical setting would be superfluous and futile; it could superimpose no finer melody, it could only obscure that which is already present.

§ 13. The characteristic form of speech-verse is probably the

<sup>1</sup> Words written for singing require, of course, a greater percentage of open vowels and liquid consonants.

blank verse of drama written for the stage, where it has usually been felt of some importance to find a medium as little removed as possible from the conversational standard without losing a distinct verse character. Here it is the general law that the verse form must reinforce the rhetorical and logical significance, although of course the same verse form sometimes becomes distinctly lyrical in character, as notably in parts of *Romeo and Juliet* and of *Richard II*, when the emotional significance outweighs the intellectual.<sup>1</sup>

The characteristic we call 'weight' is more important and is better brought out in the reading of speech-verse than in song-verse, because in rhetorical delivery this has first importance and the isochronism is sometimes only approximate. The singing voice, however, is not so intent on the logical stress; there is more regard to the melodic than to the resonant qualities of sound, and in the song-lyric the isochronism can therefore be more rigorously imposed. The above-quoted stanza from *Prometheus Unbound* has the quality of 'singing itself' to such a degree that the lightness of the ictus-syllables *As* and *And* causes no perplexity or doubt.

§ 14. There must, in the nature of things, always be this twofold aspect of verse, though perhaps since the end of the eighteenth century we have had a more extensive use of song-verse on the one hand, and of literary prose on the other. Cowley had said that the music of numbers 'sometimes (especially in songs and odes), almost without anything else, makes an excellent poet'. There have been of late many poets who would probably agree with Flaubert that 'un beau vers qui ne signifie rien est supérieur à un vers moins beau qui signifie quelque chose', and that a fine lyric may arise simply from a subtle synthesis of exquisite rhythms with a minimum of explicit meaning, the words being chosen for their melodic qualities and emotional suggestiveness, rather than for their intelligible value. But although the metrist's first concern is with such questions as whether there is any 'committing short and long', or rather light and heavy, an adequate theory must contemplate the dependence of lyric or song verse on the emotional content or suggestiveness of the word-material; for this is as

<sup>1</sup> Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess* is not quite a fair example, not so much because most of its heroic verse is rimed as because it is not essentially a stage play, but, as Swinburne called it, 'simply a lyric poem in semi-dramatic shape, to be judged only as such'.

important as the dependence of speech-verse on its intellectual content and associations. In either case the material is not pure sound, but articulate, significant sound.

This alone is sufficient to vindicate the position of metrical law as something quite distinct from either phonetic or musical law, although of course the ideal verse will not set itself in opposition to those laws without sufficient justification on other artistic grounds.

## ADDENDUM

### ON PITCH-RELATIONS IN SONG AND LYRIC VERSE

When the words of song are furthermore set to music, they have also to submit themselves to an artificial scale of pitches, foregoing to a considerable extent those gliding transitions in pitch which mark many delicate emotional utterances. There is, perhaps, a loss of freedom, but a gain in exactitude and certainty of melody. 'Melodic motion is change of pitch in time. To measure it perfectly, the length of time elapsed, and the distance between the pitches, must be measurable. This is possible for immediate audition only on condition that the alterations both in time and in pitch should proceed by regular and determinate degrees. This is immediately clear for time . . . [for] in music, rhythm, as the measure of time, belongs to the inmost nature of expression. . . . It was also necessary that the alterations of pitch should proceed by intervals, because motion is not measurable by immediate perception unless the amount of space to be measured is divided off into degrees' (Helmholtz, *Tonempfindungen*, Engl. trans., pp. 387, 388).

## XIV

### THE METRES OF ENGLISH VERSE

§ 1. Whether or not we adopt for purposes of analysis a scheme of notation, analogous to that of musical convention, in which the beat or ictus is represented as *always* falling on the first syllable of the bar or foot, it is clear that the staple rhythm of nearly all English speech-verse has been iambic, i. e. in rising rhythm, falling normally into disyllabic feet, and usually approximating to the

movement of what musicians call triple time. Aristotle was evidently of opinion that colloquial speech in Greek ran most readily into the iambic form; and despite the falling cadence of Old English, the same rule is hardly disputable for Modern English. The majority of recognized English poetry falls into verses which open on a light syllable and end on a heavy, the iambic cadence being unmistakably in the writer's mind. Comparatively uncommon are lines which have both an opening heavy and a final light syllable, such as we should expect if they had been deliberately composed on a trochaic basis,

Dante | ōnce pre|páred to | páint an | ángel :

and only a decided minority of them can be brought within the category of speech-verse.

§ 2. The conventional arrangement mentioned above may be justifiable for music, but poetry differs from music in that it has to deal with significant sounds, simple and compound, which have already a cadence and rhythmic individuality of their own arising out of their use in natural speech, and this, which cannot be disregarded by the poet, affects the character of the verse-movement. Most English speech-verse falls into what is known as rising rhythm. Scansion according to a trochaic scheme might represent the abstract time-relations of this, disregarding the concrete cadences; but an iambic scheme of notation has the advantage of representing both.<sup>1</sup>

§ 3. Occasionally, of course, the whole cadence of a line may be changed for some artistic reason, so long as the time-relations are preserved; and such a reversal of rhythm may with justification be indicated by the notation. This, however, is comparatively infrequent in true speech-verse, although it may be found in such a composition as *L'Allegro*, for example, which is nearer to song-verse, and contains some lines which seem to run trochaically, while most follow the iambic form. For these and for most verses

<sup>1</sup> The iambic run of English speech-verse is not due to a predominance of iambically stressed disyllables, i.e. to any tendency to make metrical and phonetic divisions coincide, but rather the reverse; for in typical heroic verse a decided majority of the disyllables are stressed on the first syllable. The abundance of unstressed particles prefixed to nouns, &c., results in the metrical divisions constantly cutting across the word-divisions, and producing a more suitable norm of movement than the clipped effect where trochaic feet and words commonly coincide.

it may be sufficient, however, simply to indicate time-relations by marking the ictus without showing foot-divisions, unless some particular purpose is thereby served.

To héar | the Lárk | begín | his flíght  
 Zéphir | with Au|róra | pláying  
 The méltíng vóice through mázes rúnning  
 Thére let Hýmen óft appéar

§ 4. In general iambic speech-verse falls most satisfactorily into five-foot measures. The reason is partly physiological—the whole line may, when this is necessary, be uttered with one inspiration, although it is long enough to admit an internal pause, or two, at which breath can be taken<sup>1</sup> without cutting up the movement of the rhythm. There is also the psychological reason—the mind can attend to a series of five beats, the auditory imagination can hold five feet within its compass, without undue strain. There is here no insistent necessity for a pause, whereas it is only by a *tour de force* that in a six-foot or longer verse a strong break, usually at or near the middle of the line, can be avoided.

Again, in a five-foot verse there is no exact middle, so that even in an end-stopped verse in which a medial pause is deliberately attempted there must be some little variation, however narrow its limits, for the line can never fall into two rhythmically similar halves; while distinctly free variation is easily and naturally introduced. On the other hand, alexandrines in sequence (though not so noticeably when they are single at the end of a Spenserian stanza or when used sporadically for the sake of variation in heroic verse) nearly always invite the exactly central pause, with, in the English foot-scheme, three beats on each side.<sup>2</sup>

These are reasons enough to account for the emergence of the five-foot iambic line as the most common and valuable metrical type of English poetry. There was in it room for everything—the decorative as well as the essential—without it being too voluminous and running to superfluity; and it was consequently well adapted for fullness of treatment of almost any theme.

§ 5. It is also noticeable that only in iambic lines, particularly of five feet, are light feet really acceptable, i. e. feet in which the ictus is materialized only in syllables with an extremely weak stress or

<sup>1</sup> Hence the French term *reprise d'haleine*.

<sup>2</sup> In the French alexandrine monotony was avoided to some extent by the use of both masculine and feminine rimes, and by variety in the number and distribution of accents, which might be arranged 2 + 2, 2 + 3, 3 + 2, or 3 + 3.



hardly any at all ; in other words, it is only here that the rhythmical beat can be made thoroughly unobtrusive so as not to dominate the sense-rhythm, without at the same time failing to make itself clearly perceptible.<sup>1</sup> On the other side a heavy thesis is admissible, adding to the weight and impressiveness of the whole foot. This capacity for variation at will *in either direction* shows itself also in connexion with the speed of the line, which may be either accelerated by trisyllabic feet or retarded by feet of emphatic monosyllables ; whereas in trisyllabic metres deviation is practically confined to one direction, viz. towards weight and slowness.

Furthermore, it is only in the heroic line that there is full scope for effectively varied distribution of rhetorical pauses and of different degrees of stress. Without its characteristic combination of stability with infinitely variable balance, the exhibition of this wide range of effects would be impossible.

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships  
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium ?

Wilt thou upòn the high and giddy mast  
Seál úp | the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains  
In cradle òf the rude imperious surge ?

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,  
Absent thee fròm felicity awhile  
And in this | hársh wórld | ^ dráw thy breath in pain  
To tell my story.

Darken'd so, yet shone  
Above them all th'Arch Angel : but his face  
Déep scárs of Thunder had intrencht, and care  
Sát on his fádéd cheek. . . .

All is not lost ; the unconqueràble will,  
And study òf revenge, immortal hate,  
And courage never tò submit or yield ;  
And what is else nót to be óvercome

The stíll, sád músic òf humanity.

A présence thát distúrbs me with the jóy  
Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwélling is the líght of sètting súns  
And the róund ^ ócean and the líving aír  
And the blúe ^ ský and in the mínd of mán :  
A mótion and a spírit, thát impéls  
Áll thínking thínghs, áll óbjects òf áll thóught,  
And rolls through all things.

<sup>1</sup> Song-verse often relies on the music to cover deficiency in natural accent ; but this nevertheless is a weakness from the metrical point of view.

The sílence thát is in the stárry ský,  
 The sléep that is amóng the lónely hýlls.  
 Stúcked from the dárk ^ héart of the lóng hýlls röll  
 The torrents, dashed to the vale :

The sound of many a heavily galloping hoof  
 Smote on her ear.

Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,  
 The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
 And murmuring of innumerable bees.

The thúnder òf the trúmpets òf the níght.

But peace they have that none may gain who live,  
 And rest about them thàt nó lóve can give,  
 And over them, while life and death shall be,  
 The light and sound and darkness òf the sea.

The facilities which such a form offers for perpetual variation of effect makes it *par excellence* the metre for a long poem, even if we regard the lines only in isolation, without taking account of its value for combinative purposes; for a more definitely pronounced beat, however taking at first, would after a time become wearisome. But at the same time, just because the rhythm is not so insistent, all the greater danger arises when liberties are freely taken: wide and perpetual divergence from the normal causes an uncertainty of rhythm which nullifies the aesthetic satisfaction that should result from the use of metre.

§ 6. The different possible variations have been enumerated previously; but they are not all used indiscriminately or with the same frequency. This is partly due to the influence exerted by the syllabic theory and a commonly felt necessity of maintaining a steady and equable movement. It is not surprising, therefore, that combined monosyllabic and trisyllabic substitution, and extra syllables that could be explained away by an elision theory or as hypermetrical, whether at the caesural break or at the end of the line, should be the characteristic modes of variation; and it is natural that they should nearly all occur in close connexion (logical and local) with pauses. In general, poets make the extra ripple as smooth as possible, especially in the fifth foot, as in

High in a chamber up a tower | to the east. (*Lancelot and Elaine.*)  
 Pure and uncombined trisyllabic feet at the end of the line, like  
 And flashing round and round, and whirl'd | in an arch  
 (*Passing of Arthur.*)

are rare in post-Jacobean verse, although not uncommon in Shakespeare :

Rouse up thy youthful blood, be val|iant and live. (*Rick. II*, i. iii. 83.)

Perfumes the chamber thus : the flame | o' the tap(er. (*Cymb. II*. ii. 19.)

Lightness of ictus in the first foot, as in

And fròm | the extrém|est úpward òf thy hêad  
To thè | descént | and dúst belòw thy f'oot. (*Lear*, v. iii. 136-7.)

which gives a very indecisive opening to the line, is generally avoided ; although it is satisfactory between two feet with full stresses, and even at the end of the line when the rhythm is firmly established and the position prevents uncertainty. Otherwise the scope for variety is almost unlimited.

§ 7. An older metre is the four-foot verse. This is so well within the compass of the voice and attention, and can so easily be taken all at once, that rapidity and lightness of movement are natural to it, and in fact are usually avoided only by deliberate intention. An internal pause, far from being necessary, is not very common. Chaucer used frequent overflow, which is natural to narrative verse in short lines, and monosyllabic feet were frequent—alone at the beginning or anywhere in combination. Its natural rapidity is easily increased by free use of trisyllabic substitution, which seems especially congenial to it, and it then becomes almost breathless. This accounts for the particular fitness of this 'light-horseman' verse for stirring narratives of swift romantic action like those of Scott and Byron, and also for humour and satire of the broader type, as in *Hudibras*, provided that it is not kept up for long without variation. But for full description and weightier narrative the line hardly gives scope enough. It is better for suggestion than for circumstance. Hence Coleridge's success in *Christabel*, and hence too its use in poetry that has really passed over to the lyric mode, as *L'Allegro*.

§ 8. Scott, in his defence of what he calls 'the eight-syllable stanza', says that it is 'more favourable to narrative poetry at least' than the heroic couplet. 'If you will take the trouble to read a page of Pope's *Iliad* you will probably find a good many lines out of which two syllables may be struck without injury to the sense ...

Achilles' wrath, to Greece the *direful* spring  
 Of woes unnumbered, *heavenly* goddess sing.  
 That wrath which sent to Pluto's *gloomy* reign  
 The souls of *mighty* chiefs in battle slain,  
 Whose bones unburied on the *desert* shore  
 Devouring dogs and *hungry* vultures tore.

Now since it is true that by throwing out the epithets italicized we preserve the sense without diminishing the force of the verse, I do really think that the structure of verse which requires least of this sort of bolstering, is most likely to be forcible and animated. The case is different in descriptive poetry, because these epithets, if they are happily selected, are rather to be sought for than avoided.'

He also considers that 'the eight-syllable stanza is capable of varieties denied to the heroic. Double rhymes, for instance, are congenial to it, which often give a sort of Gothic richness to its cadences; you may also render it more or less rapid by retaining or dropping an occasional syllable. Lastly . . . it runs better into sentences than any length of line I know, as it corresponds, upon an average view of our punctuation, very commonly with the proper and usual space between comma and comma.' But the movement of the shorter metre is either too light or too jerky, and it usually has not the dignity and body which fits the heroic line for epic and tragic poetry.

§ 9. The difficulty of the alexandrine breaking up into two has already been noticed. When it does not do this, it is apt (when in series and purely iambic) to drag itself along with rather lumbering gait. It does not march with energy divine—with either the majestic deliberation or the splendid buoyancy of the Homeric hexameter. The difference depends largely on the presence or absence of trisyllabic feet; but when anapaests are admitted in large numbers the whole movement really ceases to be that of an alexandrine, and Mr. Mackail considered that Morris in *Sigurd the Volsung* made it represent more closely than anything else in English 'the effective value of the Homeric hexameter'. Meanwhile Browning in *Fifine at the Fair* showed how much could be done by frequent *enjambement* and constant variation of internal pauses to avoid the rocking-horse movement. For examples see Ch. XX, § 1 (c), and the following from *Sigurd*:

The white flame licks his raiment and sweeps through Greyfell's mane,  
 And bathes both hands of Sigurd and the hilts of Fafnir's bane,

And winds about his war-helm and mingles with his hair,  
 But nought his raiment dusketh or dims his glittering gear;  
 Then it fails and fades and darkens till all seems left behind,  
 And dawn and the blaze is swallowed in mid-mirk stark and blind.

§ 10. Longer verses than the alexandrine even more inevitably fall into two parts, and the regularity with which a break tended to fall after the fourth foot in the early popular septenary resulted in the typical ballad measure of alternate four-foot and three-foot verses. This tendency is noticeable in later verse like Chapman's *Iliad* and Kipling's *M'Andrew's Hymn*; though the extra speed given by the frequent trisyllabic feet in *The Rime of the Three Sealers* does something to hold the line together.

Steady iambic movement then realizes itself best in the five-foot measure; it can be used with a little quickening in four-foot lines, but longer lines tend to break up unless there is such a leavening of trisyllabic feet as changes entirely the iambic cadence by the very swiftness which brings about the unity.

§ 11. Shorter verses, owing to the greater simplicity of phrase required, are only found in lyric of the graver kind, as in

Once more the Heavenly Power  
 Makes all things new,  
 And domes the red-plow'd hills  
 With loving blue;  
 The blackbirds have their wills,  
 The throistles too. (Tennyson, *Early Spring*.)

Also in Cowper's *Loss of the Royal George* ('Toll for the brave, The brave that are no more . . .'), Milton's *Nativity Ode*, &c. Two-foot verses are generally used only in combination with longer verses as above, or in the Burns stanza (e.g. of *Holy Willie's Prayer*), or in irregular pseudo-Pindarics, so that they hardly exist in their own right. The same is true of some of the short-line measures of Herrick, where there is a constant tendency to coalesce:

Here, here, I live,  
 And somewhat give,  
 Of what I have,  
 To them that crave.

Similarly with one-foot lines:

Give me a cell  
 To dwell  
 Where no foot hath  
 A path. (Herrick's *Wish to Privacie*.)

O! Times most bad  
Without the scope  
Of hope  
Of better to be had!

(*After the Troublous Times.*)

See also Swinburne's *Interpreters*, *Pan* and *Thalassius*, and *The Recall*. In Herrick's *Anacreontike*:

I must  
Not trust  
Here to any

pairs of iambic monopodies alternate with trochaic dipodies.

§ 12. The most obvious characteristic of anapaestic verse is the speed which is due to the larger proportion of light syllables. It is also more independent and self-sufficient than the iambic in shorter measures; for instance,

I am mōnarch of āll I survēy

is a line quite capable of standing by itself, having sufficient volume to satisfy the ear as a unit. In this form there is less of the tendency to rush and gallop than in longer verses; but the latter are often held together by the very impetuosity to which the anapaestic run is so favourable, especially when internal pauses are constantly varied.

And the height of its heads as the height of the utmost stars of the air  
And the ends of the earth at the might thereof tremble, and time is made  
bare. (Swinburne, *Hymn to Proserpine.*)

As the grinding of teeth in the jaws of a lion that foam as they gnash  
Is the shriek of the axles that loosen, the shock of the poles that crash.  
(*Erechtheus.*)

One infinite blossom of blossoms innumerable aflush through the gloom,  
That exults and expands in its breathless and blind efflorescence of heart.  
(*Garden of Cymodoce.*)

And the flying gold of the ruined woodlands drove thro' the air  
And the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearthstone.  
(Tennyson, *Maud.*)

The bisection which in six-foot anapaestics is constantly waiting to proclaim itself, as in

Of the maiden thy mother men sing<sup>a</sup> as a goddess with grace clad around  
nearly always does so in longer lines, as in the seven-foot verse of Swinburne's *Armada* (Pt. IV), and *Hesperia*, or the eight-foot verse of *March* and parts of the *Ode to England*.

Anapaestic dipodies, as in Shelley's *Arethusa*, tend almost as

much as iambs to run together in rhythm, so that the verse might well be printed like that of *The Cloud*:

I bñd the sun's thrōne with a bñrning zōne  
And the moōn's with a gñrdle of pearl

But continuous hypercatalexis checks this as in Scott's *Coronach* (see Ch. XXI, § 2 (*b*)), and constant end-stopping tends to do the same when combined with a disyllabic substitution that retards the movement, as in Henley's

Friends . . . old friends . . .  
One sees how it ends.  
A woman looks  
Or a man tells lies,  
And the pleasant brooks,  
And the quiet skies . . .  
Enchant no more  
As they did before.

Five-foot anapaestics are not threatened with the same insistent break, nor with quite the same necessity for speed: but, perhaps for these very reasons, they have not the same individuality as longer or shorter lines.

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight  
To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,  
That had been in a weary world my one thing bright;  
And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my despair  
When I thought that a war would arise in defence of the right,  
That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,  
The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height.

(Tennyson, *Maud*.)

The pauses that do occur fall most naturally near the middle; after the third foot being the most common position.

Swinburne's short chorus,

'We have seen thee, O Love, thou art fair',

is the finest example of this measure.

§ 13. Browning's *Saul* illustrates the peculiarly disastrous effect in this metre of heavy syllables in the thesis of an anapaest:

I repōrt as a mān may of Gōd's work—all's lōve yet all's lāw  
We have to rush the fence and then find a ditch on the other side.  
The jump would not be of so much consequence in shorter verses,  
nor in the longer ones which distinctly fall into two sections, for  
they have all the lyrical spring in them; but they are disconcerting

in these five-foot lines, where we have settled down to a steady gallop in a kind of accelerated speech-verse. We have to choose between taking the jump and missing the sense, or taking the sense and missing the jump. The only way to do both is to stop and turn back: in other words, to read the line once for the meaning, and once again for the rhythm. In a more lyric verse like

I gálloped, Dirk gálloped, we gálloped all thrée

these difficulties cause less embarrassment because rhythmic values are felt to be more important than rhetorical values:

And sée the rógues flóurish and hónest folk dróop

§ 14. Despite the divine energy of Swinburne's chorus, 'Before the beginning of years', and the seductive melody of *Dolores*, which are in three-foot anapaests, the four-foot line is probably the most characteristic measure normally anapaestic, whether alone, as in Scott's

O, Young Lochinvar is come out of the west,

*Bonny Dundee* ('To the Lords of Convention 'twas Claver'se who spoke'), and the Cavalier song from *Rokeby* ('While the dawn on the mountain was misty and grey'); Byron's

The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,

Moore's

O breathe not his name, let it sleep in the shade

She is far from the land where her young hero sleeps

'Tis believed that this Harp, which I wake now for thee

and Swinburne's

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces

or alternating with three-foot lines, as in Moore's

When he who adores thee has left but the name

Of his fault and his sorrows behind

or Wolfe's

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,

As his corse to the rampart we hurried.

§ 15. It is noticeable that lines of pure anapaests are far less frequent than lines of pure iambs; substitution is far more inevitable, and, since the anapaestic beat is more pronounced, is more desirable. But substitution is practically confined to that of two syllables for three, ♪ ♪ or ♪ ♪ • for ♪ ♪ ♪;<sup>1</sup> whereas in iambic

<sup>1</sup> Or ♪ • ♪ • or ♪ ♪ or ♪ • ♪ • ♪ • for ♪ ♪ ♪ in triple time.



metres the syllables may be either decreased or increased. This is one of the reasons for the greater effective range and pliability of the iambic rhythm.

Paeonic (quadrisyllabic) substitution is rare.

An immeas|urable ñnfinite flower of the dark that dilates and descends.

Swinburne and Yeats usually confine these to cases where the consonants are of the liquid type, as above, so that even a five-syllabled foot is found :

One infinite blossom of blossoms innú|erable aflúsh | through the gloom

But however free the substitution, the anapaestic basis can scarcely be overlooked ; for while a very few anapaests will change the character of an iambic verse and increase its pace, the anapaestic lilt takes far more disestablishing, and it has a more marked personality.

§ 16. Trochaic metres have in general a light tripping movement which is rarely heard in English speech and is very distinct from the firm and steady gait of the iambic. Thus they are usually unsuited for the graver business of speech-verse. Why the difference should arise it is not easy to say. Partly it may be because a light syllable that precedes a heavy one seems to have a certain importance of its own until the heavy one overshadows it ; but when the light syllable follows the heavy one it is never out of the shadow, and is regarded as a sort of mere tail. This shows itself also in the frequent final catalexis wherever the deliberate use of feminine rimes does not perpetually demand the full metrical form.

§ 17. The four-foot line is the one which seems to stand, or run, best on its own legs :

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,  
Nor the furious winter's rages . . .

Where the bee sucks, there suck I . . .

What is love? 'tis not hereafter ;

Present mirth hath present laughter . . .

(SHAKESPEARE.)

Worlds on worlds are rolling ever . . . (SHELLEY.)

Then let wingèd Fancy wander

Through the thought still spread beyond her. . . .

Souls of poets dead and gone,

What Elysium have ye known,

Happy field or mossy cavern,  
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern? (KEATS.)

Werther had a love for Charlotte,  
Such as words could never utter. (THACKERAY.)

You are carried in a basket  
Like a carcase from the shambles . . . (HENLEY.)

But this dancing movement can hardly be kept up satisfactorily through a long poem, witness *Hiawatha*; especially when the absence of lyric elevation makes more prominent the insignificance of many syllables which have to carry the ictus, for it is noticeable that a light arsis is less tolerable in trochaics than in iambics.

Four-foot and three-foot trochaics in alternation are effective :

Come, you pretty false-eyed wanton,  
Leave your crafty smiling!  
Think you to escape me now  
With slipp'ry words beguiling? (CAMPION.)

§ 18. The shorter trochaic measures are nearly all lyrical, and are generally combined with lines of different lengths.

Three-foot lines are the basis of Shelley's *To a Skylark* :—

With thy clear keen joyance  
Languor cannot be :  
Shadow of annoyance  
Never came near thee.

For two-foot lines see Swinburne's *Song in Season* :

Thou whose beauty  
Knows no duty  
Due to love that moves thee never . . .

where they are so closely continuous in rhythm that, but for the rimes, the pairs would be equivalent to the tetrapodies with which they alternate.

A five-foot line, although as in iambics it holds together as a unit, seems too long for the tripping movement of trochaics. In Tennyson's *Vision of Sin* (Part II) and Browning's *One Word More*, the reader experiences a feeling of relief when he reaches breathlessly the end of the line. For—and the same is true of four-foot lines—the trochaic dance does not admit of pauses in the middle of a unitary movement as the more sedate and deliberate iambic does.

You and I would rather see that angel  
Painted by the tenderness of Dante,  
Would we not? than read a fresh Inferno.

In longer lines, which tend to fall into two parts, this disability disappears; as in Swinburne's *Grace Darling* and 'Clear the way, my Lords and Lackeys, you have had your day' (seven-foot lines), Poe's *Raven* and Tennyson's *Locksley Hall* (eight-foot), and the lines *To Virgil* (nine-foot: 'Roman Virgil, thou that singest Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire'). But in the six-foot lines of *The Last Oracle* Swinburne often contrives to avoid this effect of bipartition by allowing only a very slight pause, and that usually not in the middle of the line. The pause, too, is frequently in the middle of a foot, and for this reason interferes rather less with the rhythmical continuity of the line. It is also noticeable that Swinburne here contrives to give a graver movement to the rhythm, which is as suitable to the subject as it is unusual.

§ 19. With regard to the structure of trochaic verse in general:

(1) substitution of monosyllabic or trisyllabic feet within the line is far less common than in iambic verse;

(2) final truncation is far more common than are feminine endings in iambic verse, and is usually only avoided where there is a deliberate scheme of double rimes (Browning's *One Word More* is a notable exception);

(3) anacrusis or upbeat is extremely common.

These last two points show the difficulty even in song-verse of escaping entirely from the natural speech rhythms of the language.

§ 20. In dactylic verse it is perhaps more difficult to avoid anacrusis and open with a true unmistakable dactyl, and final catalexis is particularly hard to avoid—rather more so when rime is necessary. In the absence of rime a slight rearrangement would remove the apparent anacrusis and final truncation:

The)bléak wind of	Márch made her
trémble and	shíver, but
nó't the dark	árch or the
bláck-flowing	ríver ^.

There is furthermore a scarcity of suitable dactylic rimes. For the rime often induces a stress on the final syllables, as in

Flash'd all their sabres bare,  
Flash'd as they turn'd in air  
Sabring the gunners there . . .

and so destroys the true dactylic character of the last foot, if it is intended as a dactyl. Dactyls in general have often been marred

by the occurrence of many heavy syllables in thesis; and Southey allows this at the end of lines even without the excuse of rime:

Weary way wanderer languid and | sick at heart  
Travelling painfully over the | rugged road.

Browning has perhaps been the most successful writer in dactyls, but he has boldly—and wisely—made free use of catalectic lines:

This is a | spray the Bird | clung to ^,  
Making it | blossom with | pleasure ^ . . .

Just for a | handful of | silver he | left us ^,  
Just for a | ribbon to | stick in his | coat ^ . . .

Three-foot and four-foot lines, as with anapaestics, are generally, most successful. Dipodies, with constant catalexis and anacrusis, have been written by Hood ('Take her up tenderly') and Tennyson (*Merlin and the Gleam*—without rime):

Then to the melody  
Over a wilderness  
Gliding, and glancing at  
Elf of the woodland . . .

Longfellow has not only hexameters (*Evangeline* and *Miles Standish*) but octometers (*Golden Legend*, Part IV). But the difficulties here mentioned have generally kept poets away from dactyls. Any considerable use of masculine endings affects not merely the final cadence, but the run of the whole line, and, especially when combined with anacrusis, practically changes it to anapaestic verse; and on the other hand, when a pure dactylic cadence is achieved, with or without rime, the result is felt to be rather unnatural and something of a *tour de force*.

Imitations of the classical hexameter are treated separately.

§ 21. Paeonic metres are found usually only in song-verse of the lighter type, e.g. 'The Policeman's Lot' in Gilbert's *Pirates of Penzance*:

When the | enterprising | burglar's not a | burgling,  
When the | cutthroat isn't | occupied in | crime ^

But this verse has both a major rhythm (as marked above) and a minor rhythm, which is marked out below:—

When the | enterprising | burglar's not a | burgling, when the |  
cutthroat isn't | occupied in | crime

And the paeon, which is found only in the major rhythm, is therefore something between a true paeon and a ditrochee. But elsewhere the paeon is found even in the minor rhythm:

His | énergetic fist should be | réady to re|sist  
A | díctatórial | wórd.

Compare also

The rích attórney was as góod as his wórd,  
which corresponds with

When I, good fríends, was cálléd to the bār.  
The speed of these lines is, of course, exceptional.

§ 22. Trochees and iambs cannot be mixed in the same line (nor can dactyls and anapaests); but there is no *a priori* reason why they should not be used in different lines of a stanza for the sake of antiphonal effect. I believe this was intended by Shelley in his *To a Skylark*:

Líke a | glówworm | gólden  
Ín a | déll of | dēw, |  
Scáttering | únbe|hólden  
Its a|ériál | híe

Amóng | the flówers | and gráss, | which scréen | it fróm | the víew:  
Of the twenty-one stanzas, only two have the last line commencing with a stressed syllable, and these two have the combined substitution that is so common in iambic schemes ( $\wedge \text{—}$  |  $\cup \cup \text{—}$ ); and only one has a feminine ending (*singest*). This seems clear enough evidence that there is a deliberate reversal of rhythm, and not a mere accidental or optional anacrusis to a trochaic line. The same may be true of Swinburne's *Riever's Neck-Verse*:

Sóme die | láughing and | sóme die | quáffing,  
And sóme | die hígh | on trée:  
Sóme die | spínning, and | sóme die | sínning,  
But fág|got and fire | for yé, | my déar,  
Faggot and fire for ye.

and Herrick's *Anacreontike*:

I must  
Not trust  
Here to any.

§ 23. The majority of verse proclaims itself clearly as either rising or falling rhythm, and of this much can be further defined as iambic or anapaestic, trochaic or dactylic, triple time or 'common' time (duple or quadruple). There remains, however, a certain portion which, rhythmic beyond doubt, does not commit itself quite so clearly to one type of rhythm; its cadence seems to be perpetually changing and refuses to be fixed in definite forms. There

is secondary rhythm unmistakably present too, but it does not always help to resolve the apparent conflict between speech-rhythm and verse-rhythm. A fine example of this is one of Henley's short poems. The opening

When you wáke in your críb

is apparently rising, but then come lines which, especially when run together,

Wáiling and stríving To réach from your féebleness  
Sóme thing you féel Will be góod to and chérish you,  
Sóme thing you knów And can rést upon blíndly

show up firmly the falling cadence; and we find that all can be set to this scheme. Then, again, the next stanza starts with an upbeat and apparently maintains an anapaestic movement for some dozen lines before with fine effect comes the change:

Sudden a hand—  
Mother, O Mother!—  
God at His best to you,  
Out of the roaring  
Impossible silences,  
Falls on and urges you,  
Mightily, tenderly,  
Forth, as you clutch at it,  
Forth to the infinite .  
Peace of the Grave.

'Time and the Earth' (*To A. J. H.*) suggests the rising cadence almost to the end; but in *The Song of the Sword*, despite such lines as

The voice of the Sword from the heart of the Sword

and those commencing,

Stooping, He drew  
On the sand with His finger  
A shape for a sign  
Of his way to the eyes . . .

the effect is predominantly dactylic with free anacrusis. This is even more evident in Tennyson's rendering of *The Battle of Brunanburh*. But for all these cases, not merely to avoid the necessity of choice, but rather to recognize an evident demand for unrestricted freedom of cadence, it would be preferable to use the term 'two-beat' rather than a term suggesting feet. Similarly it is advisable to call *L'Allegro* 'four-beat verse'. It can be scanned as iambic throughout with occasional feminine endings (10 in 142 lines) and frequent initial truncation (55 in 142), or both (5 in 142),

or as trochaic with very frequent anacrusis and general catalexis; but it would not be correct to say that it is built upon a trochaic base when there are only five completely trochaic lines in 142, for Milton would have contrived to make his intention more unmistakable. He clearly had the trochaic lilt frequently coming into his mind as a natural and pleasing way of differentiating metrically between the temper and outlook of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, but he was not willing to desert his base.<sup>1</sup> Morris wrote much of *Love is Enough* in verse that was deliberately intended to recall the principles of Old English verse.

§ 24. Trisyllabic metres have greater speed on account of the greater proportion of unaccented syllables. Their suitability for rapid narrative or gay, light-hearted song is therefore obvious; witness Shelley's *Arethusa*, Kingsley's *Andromeda*, Browning's *Cavalier Tunes* and *How They brought the Good News*, Swinburne's 'When the hounds of Spring are on Winter's traces'; and the same is true where iambic metres have a free admixture of anapaests, as in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* or Tennyson's *Revenge*. At the same time Hood showed that a dactylic metre could be used for pathetic effects; and such lines as Tennyson's

To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation  
and

Lét the bëll be tóll'd:  
And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd;  
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd  
Thro' the dome of the golden cross;  
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss . . .

and Wolfe's *Burial of Sir John Moore*, and Arnold's *Rugby Chapel*, and Henley's lines referred to above ('When you wake in your crib . . .') all show that a solemn note can be struck in trisyllabic rhythms.<sup>2</sup> The criterion, therefore, is probably subjective rather than objective: it depends not so much on the matter that is to be represented as on the imaginative state of the poet, on the level of poetic temperature; when this is at white heat there is a rush of

<sup>1</sup> There are eight lines in *Il Penseroso* with feminine endings, but they all have anacrusis and therefore nine syllables, and in abstract form, therefore, give no more proof of a trochaic than of an iambic design.

<sup>2</sup> The length and quality of the vowel sounds contribute largely to the effect; and of course, however much we may abstract for purposes of analysis the meanings of words, their intellectual and emotional associations are of the greatest importance in the creation of the poetic atmosphere.

passion and imagination or a hearty zest which is best represented by trisyllabic measures, whether for a narrative of action or for a lyric, for intense sorrow or ecstatic joy.

Trochaic measures can also be swift, as in *Hiawatha* :

Then upstarted Hiawatha  
And with threatening look and gesture  
Laid his hand upon the black rock,  
On the fatal Wawbeck laid it,  
With his mittens, Minjekahwun,  
Rent the jutting crag asunder,  
Smote and crushed it into fragments,  
Hurled them madly at his father . . .

or as in Henley's *Operation* :

Then the lights grow fast and furious,  
And you hear a noise of waters,  
And you wrestle, blind and dizzy,  
In an agony of effort.

or gay, as in many a lyric. But they have not the same momentum ; their movement is lighter and daintier, and more under control. A trochaic cadence, too, can be used for solemn purposes, as in Swinburne's *Last Oracle* and Tennyson's *To Virgil*, or for tender pathos, as in the song in *Cymbeline* :

Fear no more the heat o' the sun.

An important characteristic of trisyllabic metre is the striking insistence of its beat owing to the strong contrast between the heavy arsis and the two light syllables in thesis. A result of this is that it is not quite suitable for work in which perpetual modulation of the rhetorical emphasis is required, as in drama or other speech-verse, because this is made too crudely obtrusive by coincidence with the strong ictus of a pure anapaest or dactyl. On the other hand, emphatic syllables in the thesis of a trisyllabic foot embarrass the rhythm (see § 13 on Browning's *Saul*<sup>1</sup>), although in slower moving and constantly checked verse spondaic substitution may be introduced with excellent effect :

A wōman lōoks  
Or a mān | tēlls līes.  
The fūll | strēams fēd | on flower of rushes

<sup>1</sup> Worse examples still are :

But I sink the pretension as fearing a man may o'ertake  
*God's own spēd* | in the one way of love : I abstain for love's sake . . .  
*All's one gīft* : | thou can'st grant it, moreover, as prompt to my prayer.



## XV

## IMITATION OF CLASSICAL METRES

## A. THE HEXAMETER

§ 1. The revival of classical learning in Tudor England led to a dissatisfaction with all native poetry of the preceding period, a desire to improve the outlook for English verse, a belief that this could be done only by recourse to the classical system of prosody, and, finally, many attempts to reproduce quantitative hexameters in English.

§ 2. Most of the theorists, Puttenham above all, could not discriminate effectively between accent and quantity in verse, and none had any accurate sense of the individual quantities in English. Campion had sagacity enough to say that 'we must esteem our syllables as we speak, not as we write'; but in their pseudo-classical experiments this necessity was neglected.

These reasons alone were sufficient to make success impossible. But several of them, at one time or another, saw that natural English verse as it was actually written depended on accent for its *ictus metricus*, and it became evident that if poetry was to remain in vital connexion with the living language, accent *must* hold that position. Campion said that 'chiefly by the accent the true value of syllables is to be measured'. Daniel considered that the words and rhythms of English 'fall as naturally already in our language as ever arte can make them, being such as the eare of itselfe doth marshall in their proper roomes', and would not have them yield 'to the authoritie of antiquitie'.<sup>1</sup>

§ 3. Something like this view prevailed in the earlier nineteenth century. The *Edinburgh Review* of July 1821 asserted that the quantitative hexameter could not be naturalized because English verse depended upon the discrimination between accented and

<sup>1</sup> The view of common sense is vigorously expressed by Nash: 'The Hexameter verse I graunt to be a Gentleman of an auncient house (so is many an English begger), yet this Clyme of ours he cannot thrive in: our speech is too craggy for him to set his plough in: hee goes twitching and hopping in our language like a man running upon quagmires, up the hill in one Syllable, and down the dale in another, retaining no part of that stately smooth gate which he vaunts himselfe with amongst the Greeks and Latins.'

unaccented syllables. And Southey saw that it would involve imposing a new pronunciation on the public. A step towards this was taken by Stone, who, recognizing that, for metrical purposes at least, pronunciation would have to be arbitrarily and authoritatively fixed as a firm basis for the experiment, elaborated some rules for the determination of quantity and composed hexameters in accordance with them, such as

Glórýing | ìn the ràp|íd fòoted | hínds and | hárdy-fóot|ēd béárs

He gives careful directions for the reading of his verses, but, apart from his views about accent, the very necessity for these emphasizes the utterly artificial character of the attempt.

§ 4. James Spedding's lines, such as

Verses | so modu|late, so | tuned, so | varied in | accent,  
Rich with unexpected changes, smooth, stately, sonorous,  
Rolling ever forward, tide-like with thunder in endless  
Procession, complex melodies, pause, quantity, accent.

are probably the most Virgilian in metrical pattern of any English hexameters, but, as even Stone admits, they are quite un-English in sound. Furthermore, to the average English ear they are not obviously rhythmical. We can take pleasure in reading these verses, and especially the Poet Laureate's 'Now in wintry delights', because we know they are modelled on the classical hexameter. We at once recall the scheme of that metre, impose it on the verses, and read accordingly. Most of us of yore scanned many hundreds of hexameters before we were ever required to scan one of English verse; but nevertheless if a reader met one of the above-quoted lines embedded in prose, just as he has met 'How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning' in reading the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, it would not inevitably proclaim itself as verse, unless he were carrying the hexameter scheme deliberately in mind. This being so, it is difficult to believe that such verse can have any other than a purely academic value and interest.

Arnold insisted that 'it is advisable to construct *all* verses so that by reading them naturally—that is, according to the sense and legitimate accent—the reader gets the right rhythm; but for English hexameters that they be so constructed is indispensable'. The inability of the most correct classical imitations to 'read themselves' may be a proof of scholarship, but it effectually prevents quantitative metres on the classical scheme from ever being naturalized in England.

§ 5. There are other factors in the problem. One of them—the difference between the nature and function of accent in the two languages—has already been discussed. Another is mentioned by F. W. Newman, who notes that Greek was ‘a highly vocalized tongue; while ours is overfilled with consonants’. It is partly, no doubt, for this reason that the classical languages and the Romance languages descended from them are more smoothly continuous in sound than English and Germanic tongues in general. As Calverley says, ‘A Greek line is, in fact, a succession of vowels separated by consonants introduced sparingly and under such restrictions that it flows on uninterruptedly from syllable to syllable. The flow of an English line is generally choked (so to speak) by blocks of consonants thrown in *ad libitum*.’<sup>1</sup>

§ 6. This not only made elision more feasible, but to a certain extent justifies in Greek and Latin the convention by which the last syllable of a word ending in a consonant was in classical prosody considered long instead of short when the next word opened with a consonant. Latin prosody makes *et* long by position in *Aen.* ii. 133,

et salsae fruges et circum tempora vittae

but short in line 152,

dixerat. ille dolis instructus et arte Pelasga.

So in line 145,

his lacrimis vitam dāmus, et miserescimus ultro

if *-tam* and *dam-*, taken strictly *in isolation*, are not exactly equal, *dam-* with the longer consonant would be longer. It is as if in theory these lines were divided (in a way phonetically absurd):

ets-als|ae frug|es etc|irc-umt|emp-or-a | vitt-ae

his lacrimis vit|amd-am-us | etm-is-er|esc-im-us | ultro

It is true that the combination *-tam dam-* is more difficult to pronounce than *damus* on account of the consonantal blockage; but it is quite arbitrary and phonetically incorrect to say that there-

<sup>1</sup> Campion attributed this to another cause; the dactylic metres, he said, have had only ‘passing pitiful successes; and no wonder, seeing it is an attempt altogether against the nature of our language. For both the concourse of our monosyllables make our verses *unapt to slide* . . .’ (*Observations*, ch. 3). English is by no means markedly more monosyllabic than Greek, but Campion, I believe, was thinking not of number, but of combinative facility, as the italicized words indicate.

fore *-lam* must be longer than *dam-*. The combination is longer, but the true reason is probably that a pause intervenes if the consonants are distinctly pronounced. Prosodic theory may, if it likes, assume that this pause is added on to the first syllable; so that *-lam* plus pause is longer than *dam-*. Obviously there is not the same need for a pause after *-is* in

*Palladis | auxiliis* (*Aen.* ii. 163.)

as in

*artific|is scelus | et taciti* (*ib.* 125.)

In point of natural quantity *scel-* must have been longer than *-is*, but prosodic theory was evidently bound to assume that *-is* plus the pause between the consonants was longer than *scel-*.

*artific|is*  $\wedge$  *scelus* | *et*  $\wedge$  *taciti* | *i*

§ 7. Of course no one denies that classical prosody is highly artificial. Verse written on classical principles is really impracticable in England, not only because no such prosody has grown up or been made, but also because the nature of the language, as most of our poets have felt instinctively, is against it. In all languages it is the value of sounds (or sounds and silences) in combination and not in isolation that is important for metre, but in English the words stand out individually to a greater extent than they could in Latin. The pseudo-classical hexameters of Spedding and Stone have been admitted as correct; but it is only by the artificial classical canons of quantity that in

*Sōflȳ cōm|ēth slūmb|ēr clōs|īng th' o'er|wēariēd | ēyelid*

*-eth* and *-er* are long. The actual syllables are not *-ethsl-* nor *-ercl-*, particularly as in the latter case the caesura intervenes to prevent fusion. In English this pause might be regarded as added to *-er*, but the ordinary classical hexameter did not contemplate the caesural pause as occupying metrical time.<sup>1</sup> So too in Stone's

*ās thē ārrōw-scāttēring Gōddēss*

and

*īn thē rāpid fōotēd*

the English ear does not find true dactyls.

<sup>1</sup> Probably the final trochee was reckoned equivalent to a spondee on account of the pause; and in the so-called pentameter of the elegiacs there was a 'rest' or compensatory pause, both medial and final:

—  $\cup$   $\cup$  | —  $\cup$   $\cup$  | —  $\wedge$  || —  $\cup$   $\cup$  | —  $\cup$   $\cup$  | —  $\wedge$

but this substitution affected the thesis alone.

## § 8. Landor declared

Much as old metres delight me, 'tis only where first they were nurtured,  
In their own clime, their own speech.

And most moderns have abandoned the attempt to transplant quantitative metres. Southey in his preface to the *Vision of Judgement* declared 'that an English metre might be constructed in imitation of the ancient hexameter, which would be perfectly consistent with the character of our language'. His system was to ignore quantity as such, and accept as a dactyl an accented followed by two unaccented syllables; instead of spondees, however, he generally used trochees, i.e. feet of one accented followed by one unaccented syllable, such as *mighty, single*. Southey ought, of course, to have called his metre an analogue instead of an imitation, since he based it on accent instead of quantity. Despite Byron's gibe at the 'spavin'd dactyls', the verses were, like most things that Southey undertook, fairly workmanlike; but the use of trochees for spondees and carelessness with regard to the caesura heavily discounted even their analogical character.

§ 9. Longfellow's verses usually 'read themselves' much more easily than Southey's, but suffer from the same lack of the heavy feet corresponding to spondees, these being replaced too frequently by trochees (which lighten the verse too much and destroy the analogy with the classical hexameter), or the line being wholly dactylic. We have, as Poe objected, 'a dactylic rhythm interrupted rarely by artificial spondees which are no spondees at all'. Some of the poorest of these are *Sat the, pallid, anon the*. The latter fault, but not the over-abundance of dactyls, is avoided by Kingsley, who in his *Andromeda* achieved a wonderful fluidity.

§ 10. Clough boldly abandoned all attempt to follow classical rule, and wrote free English hexameters with plentiful variation. Their roughness, partly due to the carelessness of haste, often suits his subject; but, although they have energy enough, they have not the dignity of the Homeric hexameter. Matthew Arnold, however, thought that this was the best way of approaching the Homeric effect, that the predominance of accent in English could not without disaster be disregarded; and when Spedding objected that the English hexameter did not perfectly represent the movement of the ancient hexameter, retorted that we must work with the tools that we have. And it is equally undeniable that even when attempts to

force English into the mould of classical quantitative metre have been successful technically, the true ancient rhythm has not been reproduced.

§ 11. Calverley is probably the most pleasing of the hexameter translators save Hawtrey, and his methods are therefore instructive. He avoids dactylic excess more successfully than Kingsley, but without sacrificing the Homeric rapidity; and pays careful attention to syllabic values. Thus he achieves a stately impressiveness that is consonant with the dignity of his original.

*Iliad I*

Sing, O daughter of heaven, of Peleus' son, of Achilles,  
Him whose terrible wrath brought thousand woes on Achaia.  
Many a stalwart soul did it hurl untimely to Hades,  
Souls of the heroes of old: and their bones lay strown on the sea-sands,  
Prey to the vulture and dog. Yet was Zeus fulfilling a purpose;  
Since that far-off day when in hot strife parted asunder  
Atreus' sceptred son, and the chos'n of heaven, Achilles.

In several lines there are dactyls in which the second syllable is distinctly heavier than the third:

Say then, which of the | *Gods bid a*rise up battle between them  
Her will I never release. Old age must | *first come up*on her  
*Fat flesh of* | bulls and of goats; then do this thing that I ask thee:  
So did he pray, and his | *prayer reached the* | ears of Phoebus Apollo.

But this is an admirable means of securing variety and avoiding a perpetual lightness that is incompatible with the true hexameter effect. It will be noticed that there is a general concurrence of accent and natural quantity; the arsis is usually, though not always, long as well as stressed. Genuine spondees, like *wrath brought, bones lay*, are far from infrequent.

§ 12. The methods theoretically possible are then:—

i. To base the metre on quantity:

(a) to apply to English the prosodic rules by which classical quantities were determined, using for arsis a long syllable, and for thesis one long or two short, paying no attention to English speech-stresses. The result will be utterly alien to the English ear, 'and at best', as Swinburne exclaimed, 'what ugly bastards of verse!'

By the rush|ing swirl|ing river, | and the wom|en set a|bout it  
Unlōad|ing the wagg|ōns, carry|ing clōthes | dōwn to the | wāter

(*b*) to disregard the conventional rules of classical prosody, and rely on natural quantity, i.e. use in arsis only those syllables which the English ear accepts as long in themselves, and rule out those which are merely long by position, such as *-en* in *wom|en set a|bout it*. The weakness of this system lies in the uncertainty as to the quantity of many English words, when accent is abstracted.

ii. To base the metre on natural stresses or weight : i.e. to put in arsis a stressed syllable, no matter whether in strict quantity long (as *growth*), or short (as *son*).

Látin and Gréek are alóne its lánguages. Wé have a méasure  
Fáshioned by Míltón's own hánd, a fúller, a dēeper, a lóuder.

The only uncertainty which can arise here is from the varying degrees of stress in English and the mobility of sentence-stress, and this only in weak hands. A natural rhythm results, but it has not the fine modulation of the Homeric or Virgilian hexameter. An additional drawback is the temptation to use trochees instead of spondees. The contrast between methods i (*a*) and ii is well exemplified by the treatment of the word *hexameter* by Tennyson :

Ūp gōes | hēxāmē|tēr, wīth | mīght, ās ā | fōuntāin ā|rīsing  
and by Coleridge :

In the hex|āmeter | rīsēs the | fōuntain's | sīlvery | cōlumn

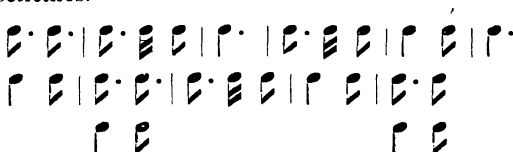
iii. To work upon a combined quantitative and accentual base. The second method may be restricted and refined by combination with method i (*b*), or still further by combination with i (*a*). The former plan is that adopted with considerable success by Hawtrey and Calverley, though perhaps with hardly sufficient stringency ; and it is probably only with the liberties that they take that the method could be followed out through a long poem. The latter plan was adopted by Tennyson in his specimen of a 'perfect hexameter' (not, however, perfect in the caesura) :

High wōods | rōarīng ā|bōvē mē, | dārk lēaves | fāllīng ā|bōut mē,  
as well as in his imitations of lyrical measures. Hallam, Lord Tennyson noted that 'some of the Hexameters in two quantitative experiments "Jack and the Beanstalk" and "Bluebeard" . . . were made or amended by him. . . Throughout the hexameters, by his advice, quantity, except here and there for the sake of variety, coincides with accent.'

Jack was a poor widow's heir, but he lived as a drone in a beehive,  
Hardly a handstir a day did he work. To squander her earnings  
Seemed to the poor widow hard, who raved and scolded him always.

## B. THE LYRIC METRES.

§ 13. The rhythmical basis of Greek lyrical metres was for long little understood, and all that could be stated was that the quantities were arranged in certain sequences. The lesser Asclepiad was — — — ◡ ◡ — — ◡ ◡ — ◡ —, the lesser Sapphic — ◡ — — — ◡ ◡ — ◡ — ◡, and so on. Now if one long is equal to two shorts, it is difficult to find any rhythm in this; but clearly notes were not confined to these arbitrary values, and a musical notation (not different in principle from that of the Greeks) will bring out the probable rhythmic schemes.



Difficulties arose because syllables which the Greeks could in singing easily give more than their normal length could not be so treated when in Latin they were recited. A compensatory pause or rest was therefore utilized, so that the third and sixth feet of the Asclepiad were rather ♪ ♪ or ♪• ♪•; and to facilitate this pause Horace made it a rule to end a word at that point.

Maecenas atavis edite regibus.

Mere imitation of Latin quantities produced unfortunate results in the hands of some Elizabethans, and of Isaac Watts; and Southey (parodied by Canning) left the track entirely. But where poets have tried, with the natural means at their command, to reproduce the rhythm of the original, without paying meticulous attention to what are, for English, fictitious rules of quantity, but letting the ictus fall only on syllables which can well bear it, the results were far more satisfying, for English words are evidently more plastic than Latin.

§ 14. The Sapphic stanza has three lesser Sapphic lines





followed by an Adonius<sup>1</sup> ♪ · ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ or ♪ · ♪ ♪ | ♪ · ♪ ·

rebus angustis animosus atque  
fortis appare: sapienter idem  
contrahes vento nimium secundo  
turgida vela.

In Swinburne's *Sapphics*

All the | níght sléep | cáme not u|pŏn my | eýelids,  
Shed not dew, nor shook nor unclosed a feather,  
Yet with lips shut close and with eyes of iron  
Stŏod and be|héld me

the common rhythmical basis is quite clear, and yet each line has a delicately varied cadence of its own. Swinburne was particularly happy in his arrangement of the lingering spondaic effect in the second foot.

In Tennyson's quantitative example

Faded ev'ry violet, all the roses,  
Gone the glorious promise; and the victim,  
Broken in this anger of Aphrodite,  
Yields to the victor.

the second line naturally invites scansion as a hendecasyllabic

♪ ♪ | ♪ · ♪ ♪ | ♪ · ♪ · | ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪

but could be brought nearer to the Sapphic rhythm by transposing the second and third feet with a slight alteration

Gone the prospect glorious;

A typical Elizabethan experiment in quantity is from Sidney's *Arcadia*:

If mine | eýes can | spéake to doe | hēartie | érrand,  
Or mine eyes language she doe hap to judge of,  
So that eyes message be of her received,  
Hope we do live yet.

The glaring reversals of accent in the middle lines prevent them from flowing as an English rhythm, while judged by classic rules of quantity all are imperfect. In the latter respect Isaac Watts is more careful, but lines that run well like

Whén the fferce North-wínd with his áiry fŏrces

<sup>1</sup> The Adonius is used regularly in Sir William Watson's *England my Mother*, sporadically by Hood in *The Bridge of Sighs*:

Ówning her | wéakness.

are rare, and his use for the arsis of light syllables only long by position is unsatisfactory, as in

Rears up | the Balt|ic to a | foaming | fury  
How the poor sail|ors stand a|mazed and tremble

while *stand* in the shortest place of the line may well make others amazed.<sup>1</sup>

§ 15. The hendecasyllabic scheme was probably

i.e. of much the same type as the lesser Sapphic, but with the trisyllabic foot in the second position. The rhythm of Swinburne's *Hendecasyllabics* is unmistakable :

Í be|hólding the | súmmer | dēad be|fóre me

except in the first line, where the weakness of the first ictus would tempt a reader unwarned by the title into taking it as an anapaestic verse :

In the mōnth of the lōng decline of roses

He often introduces a valuable spondaic tendency in the first or last foot :

Fáir fálse | léaves (but the | súmmer | léaves were | fálses  
Gazing eagerly where above the | sēa-márk

as does Tennyson :

Thēy shóuld | speak to me not without a | wēlcóme  
Áll thát | chorus of indolent reviewers.

Tennyson's Hendecasyllabics were intended to be

All in quantity, careful of my motion

but a note says, 'These must be read with the English accent'. What then are we to do with

O blatant magazines, regard me rather

<sup>1</sup> Sidney is one of the few who have imitated the lesser Asclepiad :

O sweet woods the delight of solitariness

This exhibits again the futility of making the ictus fall on an unimportant word like *of*, which is only long by position. See also his hendecasyllabic experiment ('Phaeniciades') :

Of Vir|tue's regi|ment shin|ing in | harness.

In a line which runs well accentually :

Reason, | tell me thy | mind, if here be reason

a classicist would doubtless regard *me* and *thy* as long.

which, with the English accent, reads like an heroic line with feminine ending,

O blá|tant mág|azínes, | regárd me ráth(er?

The mere fact that the second *a* of *blatant* is followed by two consonants in its own syllable and one in the next does not make it in English a good ictus carrier. The fault is not in the first foot, where a spondee was always allowable, and even two syllables which would be conventionally represented as  $\cup -$ , probably treated as  $\text{♩} \cdot \text{♩} \cdot$ ; the ictus falling on the first. Even a slight doubt here would always be rectified by a correct second foot, as in such a line as

In fine | quantity | our inventive writing  
or in Swinburne's

And green | fields of the | sea that make no pasture

The difficulty could have been easily removed:

Ó yóu | próud maga|zínes regárd me ráther

§ 16. Alcaics have been little imitated, despite the prevalent anacrusis or upbeat which opens the door to an iambic cadence. The scheme is usually represented as

$\cup | - \cup | - \cup | - \cup \cup | - \cup | -$   
 $\cup | - \cup | - \cup | - \cup \cup | - \cup | -$   
 $\cup | - \cup | - \cup | - \cup | - \cup |$   
 $- \cup \cup | - \cup \cup | - \cup | - \cup ||$

but the rhythm was probably continuous, and might be shown

$\text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \cdot \text{♩} \cdot | \text{♩} \cdot \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \cdot \text{♩} \cdot$   
 $\text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \cdot \text{♩} \cdot | \text{♩} \cdot \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \cdot \text{♩} \cdot$   
 $| \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \cdot \text{♩} \cdot | \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \cdot \text{♩} \cdot |$



Fortuna, saevo laeta negotio et  
ludum insolentem ludere pertinax,  
transmutat incertos honores,  
nunc mihi, nunc alii benigna.

The Greek Alcaic metre was apparently a somewhat lightly running metre, distinguished from the Sapphic by a regular anacrusis. Horace, however, increased its weight and made it rather slower by various changes: (1) making the anacrusis (real or apparent) nearly always 'long'; (2) avoiding short syllables in the second foot of the first three lines (cf. Tennyson's 'deep-domed'); and (3) by using a diaeretic caesura after the second complete foot (nearly always spondaic) in the first two lines. These helped to give the Horatian Alcaic greater dignity of movement and make it, as Tennyson said, 'perhaps the stateliest metre in the world, except the Virgilian hexameter at its best'.

O | mighty | mǝuth'd in|vǝntor of | hǝrmon|ies,  
O | skilled to sing of Time or Eternity,  
God|-gǝfted | ǝrgan|-vǝice of | Ēngland,  
Milton, a | nǝme to re|sǝund for | āges

Tennyson, however, in these fine Alcaics to Milton—splendidly sonorous and liquidly musical according to the transition of idea—takes advantage of the greater freedom of the Greek model, as when he uses 'The' as an anacrusis in line 10, and uses light syllables in the second foot, such as *sing of, organ, Eden* (l. 10), and *hued the* (l. 15):

The | brǝoks of | Ēden | mǝzily | mǝrmur|ing  
And | crimson|-hued the stately palm-woods

Alcaeus was sufficient authority for this, without arguing that *-an* in *organ-voice of* or *the* in *hued the stately* are long by position.<sup>1</sup> Like Alcaeus, too, he generally dispenses with an internal break. More serious is the excessive weight of the so-called anacrusis, especially when the first full foot has only a light syllable to carry the ictus, as in

Starred) frǝm Je|hovah's gorgeous armouries  
Tower,) ās the | deep-domed empyrǝan

To neutralize the tendency to read with a dactylic opening (or a separate monosyllabic foot, as distinct from a *hemimer*) it is

<sup>1</sup> According to classical rules he falsifies the quantity of the first syllable of *Eternity* by putting it in a place which requires a short.

hardly sufficient for *from* and *as* to be merely long by position. And in view of the probably continuous rhythm of the original, the balance is not quite perfect, as the following arrangement shows:

Whose) Títan | ángels, | Gǎbriél, | Ábdí|èl, Starr'd | fròm Je|hovah's |  
górgeous | ármour|ies, Tower | às the | dēep-domed | émpy|rean

Tennyson's method, nevertheless, is probably the one that gets nearest to the original effect, though the restriction of phrase involved in such metres makes freedom of composition almost impossible; and no one approaches nearer to the cunning metrical art of Horace.

§ 17. Swinburne's *Choriambics* follow the metrical scheme of the Greater Asclepiad:



in which an apparent combination of the form — ∪ ∪ —, i.e. choree (trochee) + iamb, occurs three times. The monosyllabic foot may once have been completely filled by a syllable lengthened to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times, but a double caesura is usually found, which facilitates a rest (i.e. a compensatory, as well as a suspensory, pause), as in Hor. *Carm.* i. 11:

Spem longam reseces. ¶¶ dum loquimur, ¶¶ fugerit | invida

and in the second line of

Ah thy beautiful hair! so was it ónce^bráided for me, for me;  
Nów for | dēath is it | crówned, ¶¶ ónly for | dēath, ¶¶ lóver and | lórd  
of | thée^

In the first line of the poem

Love, what ailed thee to leave ^ life that was made ^ lovely, we  
thought, with love?

the caesuras are less marked, and the pause more obviously compensatory. This variation adds to the beauty of the rhythm. Swinburne has been careful in providing sufficiently strong syllables for the internal monosyllabic feet, so that in no case is the rhythm doubtful. The only weak line is

Lov'st thou death? is his face fairer than love's, brighter to look upon?  
where the final syllable is too light, and the adversative emphasis of *his* is rather lost by its position in thesis.

The *Galliambic* is a form of *Ionic* metre, with constant anacrusis (*ionicus a minore*), used by Catullus in his *Attis*. The ionic foot is

one of six 'times'  $\text{P P P P}$ , but other equivalents,  $\text{P P P P}$  or  $\text{P P P P P}$ , may be used as variations. Tennyson's *Boadicea* is meant to be a 'far off echo' of the *Attis* metre:

While a|bóut the shóre of | Móna thóse Né|rónian légion|aries  
 Burnt and | bróke the gróve and | áltar óf the | Drúid and Drúid|ess

but the ditrochaic metron has clearly become the base, and the double beat is far more marked than it probably was in Catullus, the minor rhythm being in fact almost as strong as the major rhythm. Furthermore, a distinct beat is given to what was originally an anacrusis (of two shorts or one long), so that the metre has practically become one of eight trochees,<sup>1</sup> with some tribrachic substitutions, as in

Néar the | cólony | Cámulo|dúne,  
 did they | píty me | súppli|cátíng?  
 Múst their éver-|ráveníng | éagle's beák and | tálon an|nihílate us?  
 Tear the noble heart of Britain, leáve it | górlily | quíveríng?

although it is rather a compressed dactyl in the last case, and in

Britain's | bárbarous | populaces  
 Shall I | bróok to be | supplicated.

Tennyson's method in his Alcaics and Hendecasyllabics was to distinguish syllabic values by the classical rules of quantity, while at the same time making his rhythm unmistakable to an English ear by combining length and stress in the arsis, i.e. by allowing the ictus to fall only on syllables that were both long (by classical rules) and accented. In *Boadicea*, like Swinburne, he abandons artificial quantitative rules, and relies boldly on the principles of natural English rhythm, aiming rather at analogy than at strict imitation, at producing a similar effect by different means.

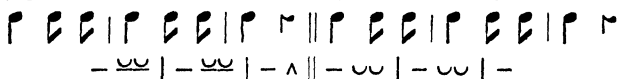
§ 18. Midway between the hexameter and the lyric metres is the elegiac metre; regular hexameters alternate with hexameters in which the third and sixth feet were monosyllabic:

$\text{P P P} | \text{P P P} | \text{P} || \text{P P P} | \text{P P P} | \text{P}$

The lengthening of the long syllables at the caesura and end of the line was easily possible in sung verse, but in the recited Latin

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson seems to have considered even the *Attis* as trochaic, for he explains of the line ending *miserable in ignominy*, 'I put a tribrach where Catullus has a trochee'.

measure was, at least partially, replaced by a 'rest' or compensatory pause which was facilitated by the metrical pause:



The catalectic line was for long called a pentameter with the idea that the monosyllabic feet were only half-feet, which, added together, were equivalent to one, giving a total of five.

The contrast between English imitations on an accentual and on a quantitative basis is well illustrated by the companion lines of the hexameters already quoted from Coleridge and Tennyson:

In the pentameter | aŷe | fálling in | mēlody | bǎck  
 Lightlŷ thē | foŷntain | fálls, | lightlŷ thē | pēntāmēt|er

Sir W. Watson's *Hymn to the Sea* is the best example of English elegiacs:

Grant, O | regal in | bounty, ^ a | subtle and | delicate | largess;  
 Grant an ē|thereal | alms, | out of the | wealth of thy | soul:

Clough disregards quantities still more boldly:

Come let us | go, though with|al a voice | whisper, the | world that we |  
 live in,

Whitherso|ever we | turn, | still is the | same narrow | crib.

Neither follow Ovid in avoiding the final monosyllabic word.

## ADDENDUM

### THE SO-CALLED 'COMBATIVE ACCENT' IN PSEUDO-CLASSICAL VERSE

Matthew Arnold complained that 'we read every Greek dactyl so as to make a pure dactyl of it; but to a Greek the accent must have hindered many dactyls from sounding as pure dactyls'; αἰόλος ἵππος or αἰγιόχοιο did not give pure dactyls like *Tityre* or *dignity*, but to a Greek they 'must have been nearly as impure' as *death-destined* or *dressed his own* are to us. But why? A Greek dactyl was simply a foot with the time values — ∪ ∪ or the ictus or metrical stress falling on the long syllable. The word-accent, i.e. the position of the highest tone or pitch, had nothing to do with the rhythmical structure. Confusion on this point in classical metric has infected the theory and practice of English imitations of classical verse.

Munro showed that in Homer coincidence of length and tonic word-accent was commoner than Spedding and others made it

appear; but such lines are nevertheless in a decisive minority. Observation of this gave rise to a theory that there was an intentional disagreement or conflict between the metrical accent and the speech-accent of words, so that the lines should not read themselves.<sup>1</sup> Thus Calverley argues that the ancients 'read their verses by an accent which was so far arbitrary that it was wholly independent of the scansion, and was intended partially to conceal the scansion', and that they 'made it a special point that their verses should *not* "scan themselves", and every form of line which did so they held bad on that account'.

It may not be quite true that classical verse was constructed without regard to speech-accent—Virgil, for instance, made the latter coincide with the ictus in the last two feet, evidently to mark still more clearly the end of the line (so that a strong end-pause was the less necessary)—but the rhythmical structure of the verse, and therefore its scansion, did not depend on the tonic accents. Probably there was no recognized law as to this 'combative accent', the poet being left free to follow his own melodic inspiration; but the result was doubtless a more definitive melody in the actual delivery, even of speech-verse, than with us, who have no law of pitch governing our pronunciation.<sup>2</sup> Rhythmically, however, no conflict would necessarily be thus produced, because the ictus was probably marked by the incidence of a metrical stress on a long syllable at the beginning of each foot, and there was no necessary connexion between stress and pitch, or between length and pitch, any more than there is in modern music.

In English we mark the ictus with just the same kind of accent, viz. stress, as we use for our word-accent. The same melodic effect, therefore, is not possible in English, unless professional elocutionists adopt a conventional system of fixed tones like the Greek, supplementary to and independent of the fixed word-stress; but this again would be a melodic, not strictly a rhythmical, device.

Spedding and others were so obsessed with this theory that in such verses as

After | Virgiliān préce|dēt ānd | práctice in | órder  
Distribut|ēd—cóuld | thēse grátif|y th' Ēt|ónian | éar-drum

<sup>1</sup> See W. J. Stone in R. Bridges, *Milton's Prosody*, &c., 1901, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> Possibly the Greek rhapsodists and actors and their traditions were more mutually dependent than our elocutionists and actors have been; but below and beyond this there are the fundamental differences in the character of the languages.



the result of the 'conflict' is not merely to disguise but to strangle and mutilate the rhythm. Stone makes matters worse, if anything, by avoiding the Virgilian combination of accent and ictus in the last two feet (see § 3). The Greeks could probably give a stress to any long syllable because the words had no natural stress of their own, i.e. just because no conflict would result. Similarly we can give, as in fact we do in singing, a high pitch to almost any syllable of a word, because the word has no fixed pitch relations; but we are not free to put a metrical stress on any syllable we like in a word, because the word has its natural stress or stresses already fixed, and to put them elsewhere would produce a conflict in which the naturally strong ones would not give way. In English verse the heavy stresses always mark out the main lines of the rhythm, so that lines quoted in § 3 and above would be read

Glōrying in the rāpid fōoted hīnds and hārdy fōoted bēars

Distrībuted cōūld these grātīfý th' Etōnian ēar-drum

—bad lines of any kind and certainly not hexameters.

NOTE. The following sentences from Schmidt's *Rhythmic and Metric of the Classical Languages* (p. 8) are of importance in connexion with §§ 5 and 6: 'The Greek language on account of its many short syllables could be pronounced with great rapidity and ease. This is seen also from the fact that the pause between the single words was very short, and consequently an entire sentence sounded, in comparison with an English sentence, almost like a single word. . . . [It is for this reason that] two consonants which begin a word make position with the final vowel of the preceding word, e.g. ἀνὰ σκήπτρῳ.'

## PART II

### SECONDARY AND TERTIARY RHYTHM— RIME AND STANZA



## XVI

### RIME

§ 1. Rhythm is marked and made manifest by the regular recurrence of similar phenomena. Primary rhythm is marked by a regular beat or ictus which coincides usually with a relatively heavy syllable at the end of every foot. The unit of secondary rhythm is the line or verse; and one of the most important ways of marking the end of the unit of secondary rhythm (for the metrical pause is often overridden) is by the periodical recurrence of sounds which are of similar quality though not absolutely identical. In other words, the metrical division into lines is often reinforced and made easily perceptible by rime.

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:  
Its loveliness increases; it will never  
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep  
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
Full of sweet dreams, and health and quiet breathing.  
Therefore on every morrow are we wreathing  
A flowery band to bind us to the earth . . .

It is also evident that a tertiary order of rhythm is manifested by the combination of verses into recurrent groups with a regular and symmetrical kind of structural arrangement.

A slumber did my spirit seal;  
I had no human fears:  
She seemed a thing that could not feel  
The touch of earthly years.  
No motion has she now, no force;  
She neither hears nor sees;  
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,  
With rocks and stones and trees.

These larger structural units are called stanzas; and the recurrence of sounds of similar quality serves not only to divide line from line, but also to mark the arrangement of lines; and to bind together and mark the integral character of each group or stanza, for each successive stanza in the series has one system of riming

sounds different in quality from, though similar in arrangement to, those of the stanzas immediately preceding or following. It has thus both a separating and a combining effect.

Rime, therefore, often plays an important part in the production of extended rhythmical effects; and it usually enforces the secondary or linear rhythm, though in different degrees and with variety of effect according to the coincidence or divergence of logical and metrical pauses.

In addition to this, the repetition of beautiful sounds is pleasing in itself, although there is, of course, a danger that 'the jingling sound of like endings', as Milton complained, may be used 'to set off wretched matter and lame metre'.

Again, as in such verses as these from Tennyson and Swinburne,

Your mother is *mute* in her grave as her *image* in *marble* above

Your father is ever in London, you *wander* about at your *will*

You have but fed on the roses and *lain* on the *lilies* of *life*

there is not only the pleasure to the ear from the perception of recurrence, but also the emphasis which certain ideas gain by having attention called to them in this way. Compare also in this respect Coleridge's

*As near as near can be*

and Pope's

Know then thyself; presume not God to scan;

The proper study of mankind is *man*.

This point was put very tellingly in an essay by Mr. G. Bourne (*Macmillan's Mag.*, May 1906): 'The two rhymed words in a stanza are above all the others conspicuous. If, therefore, the poet can also concentrate his meaning upon those same words, the light of it will be diffused the farther, the rhymes being then like beacon-fires answering one another across the whole verse. Words rich in association, full of fragrance, glowing with colour, are especially meet for rhyming; as in Burns's "My love's like a red, red rose", in which all the four lines are suffused by the meanings that emanate from *June* and *tune*. . . . With a couple of rhymes, therefore, the poet not only extracts the perfect tone-vibrations from his language, but sends his meaning through and through it.'

Rime which always coincides with the end of a sentence—the most emphatic place—as in Augustan verse it usually did, receives thereby too great a prominence; and it is therefore in verse that

makes a judicious use of overflow that we may expect to find the most subtle artistic use of rime.

But one of the dangers of the more freely overflowing verse, such as that of the earlier poems of Keats, is that the rime too often falls on unimportant words, words which have hardly strength and body enough to bear it; so that in consequence the rime is cheapened and its vibrancy lost, or an undue appearance of emphasis is given to otiose words.

Or 'tis the cell of Echo, where she sits  
And babbles thorough silence, till her wits  
Are gone in tender madness, and anon  
Faints into sleep, with many a dying tone  
Of sadness. (*Endymion*, i. 947-51.)

That when through heavy hours I us'd to rue  
The endless sleep of this new-born Adon',  
This stranger ay I pitied. For upon  
A dreary morning once I fled away  
Into the breezy clouds, to weep and pray  
For this my love. (*ib.*, ii. 553-8.)

How feeble and empty are these line endings—*sits*, *wits*, *anon*, *tone*, *upon*, *away*! None of them would have been chosen as a satisfactory ending of a sentence or clause; it is simply the facility of the overflowing form which has admitted them into a prominent place which they cannot fill. And again when Keats, riming with *glad*, says

yet in truth we've had  
Strange thunders from the potency of song

we feel that a word of greater potency than *had* is called for in that particular place. Rime has a peculiar value in run-on verse as an indicator of the secondary rhythm, but it should usually be supported by the strength and significance of the words and the balance of the phrase.

This rule, that rime should ordinarily never fall on an unimportant word (or we might add, merely on the unimportant part of a word, as in *ardency—fearfully*), is not a mere technical rule, but one that is deep-seated and affects vitally the poetic value of a passage.<sup>1</sup> As an outstanding example of weakness in riming, Shakespeare's thirteenth sonnet is quoted:

<sup>1</sup> This rule, again, will be applied more stringently to some kinds of poetry (e.g. the sonnet or satire) than to others. In long narratives some leavening with light rimes would be welcomed, but this leads on to the question as to how far rime is suitable for narrative verse.

O! that you were yourself; but, love, you *are*  
 No longer yours than you yourself here live:  
 Against this coming end you should prepare,  
 And your sweet semblance to some other give:  
 So should that beauty which you hold in lease  
 Find no determination; then you *were*  
 Yourself again, after yourself's decease,  
 When your sweet issue your sweet form should bear.  
 Who lets so fair a house fall to decay,  
 Which husbandry in honour might uphold  
 Against the stormy gusts of winter's *day*  
 And barren rage of death's eternal cold?  
 O! none but unthrifths. Dear my love, you *know*  
 You had a father: let your son say *so*.

With the exception of *lease* and *decease*, *uphold* and *cold*, how flat and lifeless are these rimes! The italicized words, *are*, *were*, *day*, *know*, *so*, are particularly weak or otiose; they have no individuality. Contrast all this with the thirtieth and thirty-third sonnets ('When to the sessions of sweet silent thought', and 'Full many a glorious morning have I seen'); or better still with Carew's song,

Ask me no more where Jove bestows,  
 When June is past, the fading rose,

with Milton's *Nativity Ode* and his 'Avenge, O Lord', and Shakespeare's 'Let me not to the marriage of true minds',<sup>1</sup> where the riming words are charged with a vibrant life and a distinctive significance and imaginative force which justifies their resonance as sounds.

The finest effects, therefore, are produced by rime which, while it is full enough to be satisfying, does not aggressively call attention to itself as a rime. But burlesque or other comic effects may be produced by rimes that are startling or far-fetched. Thus the comparative poverty in English of trisyllabic rimes makes them prominent when they are used, and attention is also attracted by ingenuity in overcoming the obvious difficulties of broken rimes, and by cleverness in making new and unexpected combinations of sounds.

The functions of Rime therefore are:

i. Structural: ( $\alpha$ ) to signalize the ends of metrical sections or lines (Secondary Rhythm), ( $\beta$ ) to mark the grouping of lines into stanzas (Tertiary Rhythm).

ii. Melodic: to give pleasure by the repetition of sounds.

<sup>1</sup> The two last are quoted in Chap. XXII.

iii. Rhetorical and emotional: to reinforce the natural emphasis of important words, and through their imaginative suggestion to strike certain chords of feeling.

The 'jingling sound of like endings' is strictly, as Milton said, 'no necessary adjunct . . . of poem or good verse', although it may be a 'true ornament', as was shown by his own early poems, like those of Campion, another opponent of rime, and it may have a still higher value as a factor in many true musical effects and harmonic combinations.

§ 2. Similarities of sound quality fall under three heads:—  
(a) alliteration, (b) assonance, and (c) rime proper—end-rime or full-rime.

*Alliteration* occurs when two or more syllables, strictly and originally stressed syllables, in close proximity commence with the same consonant sound:

*Lain in the lilies of life.*

Alliteration is

i. *Simple*, when two or more words in close proximity are linked together by the same alliteration:

*The furrow followed free*

*And the height of its heads as the height of the utmost stars of the air  
The mother of months in meadow or plain*

ii. *Compound*, when there are two or more groups of alliterative words in succession:

*The laurel, the palms, and the paeon, the breasts of the nymphs in the brake  
Dropped and deep in the flowers, with strings that flicker like fire*

*With hisp of leaves and ripple of rain*

*The bare black cliff clanged round him*

*The plowman homeward plods his weary way*

iii. *Interlaced*, when alliterations of one group occur between those of another:

*We have drunken of things Lethæan, and fed on the fullness of death*

*I heard the water lapping on the crag,*

*And the long ripple washing in the reeds*

*Follows with dancing and jills with delight*

§ 3. In Modern English alliteration is only used either as melodic ornament, often with some onomatopoeic value, or to attract attention to important words. In Old English it had a structural function, and was therefore an organic factor in verse,



not merely an embellishment or accidental element. Two or three of the metrical beats in each full line were marked by alliteration. Since one of the alliterations occurred in each half-line, the alliteration served to bind together the two half-lines (which had usually a different movement), as well as to reinforce and emphasize their individual movement.

*Stræt wæs stán-fáh, stíg wísode* (*Beowulf*, 320.)

Old English alliteration extended also to vowel sounds; and even different vowels were held to alliterate together, as in

*dtol ān-geŋea, oft gefrémede* (*ib.*, 165.)

In Middle English alliterative verse, vowel-alliteration is less frequent and is usually restricted to identical vowels.

With regard to strict alliteration in Modern English, whereas it ordinarily reinforces and emphasizes the rhythm by coinciding with the ictus, it may also give the effect of variety by its irregular occurrence at different parts of the line, or at the end and beginning respectively of two successive lines, which withdraws attention from the insistent regularity of the line-units, especially when these are also marked out by rime.

Special effects may also be produced by the arrangement in proximity of consonant sounds which are not all identical but are closely allied in respect of their phonetic production,<sup>1</sup> e. g. dentals, *t*, *d*, and the two *th* sounds, as in

Death ready stands to interpose his dart (*Par. Lost*, ii. 854.)

Fluttring his pennons vain plumb down he drops

Ten thousand fadom deep. (*ib.*, 933-4.)

Cf. also *Par. Lost*, iv. 194-8.

In general perhaps the finest melodic effects are those achieved by the least ostentatious alliteration, that which does not always receive prominence from its coincidence with a natural stress, for here as always that art is the highest whose processes are least obtrusive.

§ 4. Alliteration of a less strict and obtrusive kind is often used with delicate effect falling in the middle and at the end of words and unaccented syllables.

fierce *Phlegeton*  
Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.

Far off from these, a slow and silent stream,  
Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls

Her watery labyrinth.

(*Par. Lost*, ii. 580-4.)

<sup>1</sup> This has been called 'Phonetic Syzygy'.

There is not only the obvious *f* and *s* alliteration of the first three lines, but the more pervasive and more subtle internal alliteration of *l* and *r*. Compare also

Thammuz came next behind,  
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured  
The Syrian damse/s to lament his fate  
In amorous ditties all a summer's day.

(*Par. Lost*, i. 446-9.)

§ 5. *Assonance* consists in the correspondence between the vowel sounds of words, principally of the stressed syllables of words, along with difference of consonants.

Simple assonances affect only one syllable, e. g. *line*, *rime*, *bite*, *ride*, *while*; double assonances require identity of both vowel sounds of a disyllabic word, e. g. *blackness*, *hatchet*. *Handling* and *rambling* approximate to identity of the unaccented syllable, and in so far are not pure assonances.

Assonance at the ends of lines is to be found in some of the Latin hymns of the early Church, and was used regularly afterwards in Old French and Spanish poetry. It was used spasmodically in default of rime in some early Middle English poems, such as Layamon's *Brut*. But except in a few deliberate experiments, usually imitations of Spanish verse, it has had no systematic structural function in Modern English metre. Internal assonance has, however, been used deliberately by subtle metrical artists like Milton, Coleridge, and Tennyson to produce special and delicate melodic or onomatopoeic effects.

It moaned as near as near can be (COLERIDGE.)

Now to the scream of a maddened beach dragged down by the wave,  
Walked in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer . . . (TENNYSON.)

Symonds observed that Milton's blank verse 'abounds in open-mouthed, deep-chested *a's* and *o's*'; but equally noteworthy is his skilful and subtle interchange of vowel sounds. Tennyson is said to have believed 'that though for a definite effect the same vowel sound might be repeated in close juxtaposition, yet that the finest line contained the largest possible variety of vowel sounds, succeeding each other in a melodious sequence' (A. C. Benson, *Life*, p. 140).

There is an imitation of the Spanish structural assonance in George Eliot's *Spanish Gipsy*:

Maiden, crowned with glossy blackness,  
Lithe as panther forest-roaming,

Long-armed naiad, when she dances,  
On a stream of ether floating,—  
Bright, O bright Fedalma.

Of final assonance occurring irregularly there are frequent examples in Matthew Arnold :

We are young and the world is ours,  
For man is the king of the world.  
Fools that these mystics are  
Who prate of Nature! but she  
Has neither beauty, nor warmth,  
Nor life, nor emotion, nor power.  
But man has a thousand gifts  
And the generous dreamer invests  
The senseless world with them all.  
Nature is nothing! her charm  
Lives in our eyes which can paint,  
Lives in our hearts which can feel!

(*The Youth of Man.*)

(*Ours, power ; are, charm ; she, feel ; warmth, all.*)

See also *The Future* and *Rugby Chapel*.

With clamour thence the rapid currents drive  
Towards the retreating sea their furious tide.  
Forthwith from out the ark a raven flies,  
And after him, the surer messenger,  
A dove, sent forth once and again to spy  
Green tree or ground whereon his foot may light ;  
The second time returning, in his bill  
An olive-leaf he brings, pacific sign. (*Par. Lost*, xi. 853-60.)

Assonance is used with fine onomatopœic effect in Tennyson's

Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left and right  
The bare black cliff clanged round him, as he based  
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels.

(*The Passing of Arthur*, 354-8.)

§ 6. *Rime* in general, we have seen, means the regular recurrence after definite intervals of sounds similar in quality though not completely identical, such recurrence always taking place at the end of a line or verse-section, so that the result gives an artistic and symmetrical design.

With regard to the similarity of sounds, certain specific conditions are fulfilled by all strict *full* rimes or rimes that are commonly accepted as *good*.

1. There must be exact identity between the last metrically stressed vowel sounds of the riming lines or sections; that is

to say, the vowels of the riming words must be alike both in quality and in accentuation.

2. All sounds, consonant or vowel, following the first assonant vowel must be identical.

3. The consonant sounds preceding the first assonant vowel must be different.

Rime proper therefore is a combination of assonance and alliteration, and may be defined summarily as the likeness between the vowel sounds in the last metrically stressed syllables of two or more lines (or sections), and between all sounds, consonant or vowel, which follow. Thus *bear*, *rare* ; *finding*, *binding* ; *tenderly*, *slenderly*, are strict rimes. But *to sing* and *finding* are not good rimes because the accentuation is not similar ; *blinding* and *sinking* are not good because the similar syllables are not stressed ; *glove* and *move* are not good because the vowel sounds are not exactly identical ; *clime* and *line* differ in their final consonants ; *death* and *breathe* have both vowel and consonant sounds different ; and finally *bear* and *bare* do not fulfil the condition of difference in the initial consonants.

The latter species is called *identical rime* or *rich rime*. Rime is a sound-effect, and difference of meaning alone cannot justify such rimes as *see*, *sea* ; *be*, *bee* ; *blue*, *blew* ; or even *crew*, *accrue* ; *renewed*, *denude*. Rimes therefore may be bad for two reasons :

- (a) too much similarity—identical rimes,
- (b) too little similarity—imperfect or approximate rimes.

§ 7. *Imperfect rimes* that are not merely the result of carelessness may be classified as follows :

1. *Eye rimes* or *spelling rimes*: *brood*, *blood* ; *proved*, *loved* ; *arose*, *morose*. These are spelt alike, but are not true rimes, for rime is a matter of sound, not of spelling ; of similarity to the ear, not to the eye. The spelling often represents an original likeness of sound, but because *mōd* and *gōd* had identical vowels in Old English, *mood* and *good* do not make a correct rime in our century, though they probably did in the seventeenth (see Milton's twelfth Sonnet).

2. *Traditional* or *obsolete rimes*, i.e. words that were formerly correct rimes, but on account of change in pronunciation are now imperfect rimes ; e.g. *join*, *line* ; *obliged*, *besieged* ; *cheat*, *great* (Pope) ; *life*, *five* (Chaucer).

Similarly *countrée* represents the original accentuation, and so it

is preserved in imitations of early ballads, such as *The Ancient Mariner* (l. 518), where it rimes with *the sea*. So too in Chaucer, *yeer, soper* (i.e. *year* and *supper*); *penaunce, pitaunce*; *estate, prelate*.

3. Rimes admittedly only approximate, but deliberately employed for the sake of variety. W. M. Rossetti, after pointing out that Shelley's rimes are not always rigidly exact, says: 'It would hardly be reasonable to attribute his laxity to either carelessness, indifference, or unskilfulness: but rather to a deliberate preference for a certain variety in the rhyme-sounds—as tending to please the ear, and availing to satisfy it in the total effect, without cloying it by any tight-drawn uniformity. Such a preference can be justified on two grounds: firstly, that the general effect of the slightly varied sounds is really the more gratifying of the two methods, and I believe that, practised within reasonable limits, it is so; and secondly, that the requirements of sense are superior to those of sound, and that, in the effort after severely exact rhyming, a writer would often be compelled to sacrifice some delicacy of thought, or some grace or propriety of diction' (Shelley's *Adonais*, pp. 62–3). Mrs. Browning, too, has in one six-lined stanza (in the *Swan's Nest*) *alone, down; meadow, shadow; grass, face*; and elsewhere *guerdon, pardon; so pale, farewell; deserted, light-hearted*; and says that she has run into these 'in no spirit of carelessness or easy writing, or desire to escape difficulty', but has 'chosen them, selected them on principle', and has given a great deal of attention to the subject.

A similar principle seems to have been followed in practice by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who has many such rimes as *endows, house*; *alone, done*; *stone, on*; *charmed, warmed*; *was, grass* (from *Jenny*); *crowd, road, god*; *fear, her*; *son, town* (from *The White Ship*). He also rimes fully-stressed syllables with syllables that are normally unstressed and even by wrenching can be given only a very light secondary stress:

And the last cowslip in the fields we see  
On the same day with the first corn-poppy.  
Or may the soul at once in a green plain  
Stoop through the spray of some sweet life-fountain. .  
(*The House of Life*, xxiv and ci.)

The grasses wave o'er the ruined weir,  
But the bridge still leads to the breakwater;  
Nay, the flags are stirred in the breeze,  
And the water's bright through the dart-rushes.

(*Rose Mary*.)

which is almost as bad as the notorious *freewill* and *evil* in *Eden Bower*. These wrenched-accent rimes and obsolete rimes doubtless owe something to Rossetti's study of old ballads, where, however, the original Romance accentuation was often preserved, and of Coleridge, whose 'That come from a far countrée' is a 'literary' imitation. There are several more of this kind in *The White Ship* and *The King's Tragedy*.

Such a plea for liberty may appear quite natural in the modern Romantics, but a similar laxity is rare in the verse of Pope, Gray, and their contemporaries. Research has shown that many rimes that were once thought imperfect are supported by the prevalent pronunciation at the time of writing; it is therefore wise to suspend judgement on the few doubtful rimes that remain until further evidence is collected. Some of these traditional rimes that are also eye rimes appear to have been 'tolerated' in nineteenth-century verse.

Approximate or bad rimes are imperfect either in—

(a) Quality—(i) of vowel, e.g. *anon, tone; fans, pains; cloak, struck; house, thus* (Keats); *noble, trouble; alters, wellers* (E. B. Browning).

(ii) of consonant, e.g. *case, plays; arose, morose; is, bliss* (Keats).

(iii) of both vowel and consonant, e.g. *edifice, lies* (Keats); *was, pass* (Keats, but allowable in Milton's time); *mouth, loth; driven, heaving* (E. B. Browning).

(b) Accentuation—(i) neither of the similar endings being stressed—unaccented rimes, affecting only suffixes or inflexions which are hypermetrical, e.g. *meditation, passion* (*Endymion*, i. 975); *midnight, moonlight*.

(ii) both of the similar endings receiving only a light secondary accent, e.g. *ardency, fearfully* (*Endymion*, ii. 33-4); *images, presences* (*Lamia*, ii. 279-80).

(iii) the similarity of sound affecting in the one line a fully stressed syllable and in the other a syllable which receives only a secondary word-accent, but has to carry the ictus or metrical stress; e.g. *essences, trees; these, offices; possible, dispel; sepulchres, burrs; exhalations, who cons.* The adverbial termination *-ly* has to do double duty in Keats—*pleasantly, see; blushing, eye*. Many examples, too, will be found where the vowels are not quite identical, so that the whole rime is very questionable. Sometimes the secondary accent is wrenched for the sake of the rime (and rhythm),

as in *wayfaring, sing*; *contemplating, sober ring*; *strawberries, sees* (elsewhere *strawberries* rimes with *butterflies*); *set, velvet*; *enchantment, and bent*.<sup>1</sup>

(c) both quality and accent—*curious, house* (*Lamia*, i. 392–3).

A special case falling under (b) i or ii is that of some rimes in dactylic verse, such as Hood's *Bridge of Sighs*: *gárments, cérements*; *cónstantly, ínstantly*; *évidence, éminence, próvidence*; where the likeness is only in the thesis.<sup>2</sup>

§ 8. i. *Masculine* or *monosyllabic*. When the similarity of sound occurs in the final syllable only of each line, the rime is called masculine, no matter whether that syllable form part or the whole of a word: *boon, moon*; *begin, my sin*; *recline, divine*; *gentlemen, denizen*. This occurs normally in rising rhythms, but also in catalectic trochaic and dactylic metres.

ii. *Feminine* or *disyllabic*. When the similarity occurs in the last two syllables of each line, i.e. in the last stressed syllable and a following unstressed syllable, the rime is feminine: *grated, baited*; *brother, mother*; *summit, thumb it*. This occurs in trochaic metres or in hypercatalectic iambic (or anapaestic) metres; but it is in the latter—in rising rhythm—that its use has been so magnificently developed in the nineteenth century.

Owing to the survival of Old English inflexional forms, feminine rimes were very common in Middle English verse:

Whan that Aprillē with his shoures sōotē  
The droghte of March hath perced to the rōotē,

And smale fowles maken melodýē,  
That slepen al the nyght with open ýē,  
So priketh hem nature in hir coráges;  
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimáges

so also *stróndēs, lóndēs*; *éndē, wéndē*; *sékē, séekekē*. But the decay of inflexions made feminine rimes much less frequent during the

<sup>1</sup> *Endymion*, i. 355–6, 257–8, 873–4, iii. 796–7; *Sleep and Poetry*, 103–4. An accent on *-ed* at the end of the line as in *bewilderēd, bed* (*Endymion*, ii. 93–4) is usually avoided by other poets.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Saintsbury asserts as a 'great principle' that 'any letter or combination of letters may, for rhyming purposes, take in one word the sound that it bears in another' (*History*, iii, p. 537), or, as he states it in his *Manual* (p. 34), 'vowels in rhyme may take the value which they have in words other than those actually employed'. On this principle evidently *though* could rime with *scoff*, or with *stuff*, or with *brev*! Mr. G. C. Macaulay remarked that there is nothing 'more preposterous than the suggestion that poets ever followed any such rule'.

sixteenth century. They occur in occasional lines in Elizabethan poems, as in Lyly's

He stakes his quiver, bow and arrows,  
His mother's doves and team of sparrows;

throughout Shakespeare's sonnet

Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing.

and the song 'O mistress mine, where are you roaming?' and Campion's song

Turn back, you wanton flyer,  
And answer my desire  
With mutual greeting.  
Yet bend a little nearer,—  
True beauty still shines clearer  
In closer meeting!  
Hearts with hearts delighted  
Should strive to be united,  
Each other's arms with arms enchainin',—  
Hearts with a thought,  
Rosy lips with a kiss still entertaining.

and Herrick's

Gather ye rose-buds while ye may,  
Old Time is still a-flying:  
And that same flower that smiles to-day  
To-morrow will be dying.

and a few lines of Milton's earlier poems, and many of *Hudibras*.

But the deliberate use of disyllabic rimes in a regular alternating scheme really commences in the early nineteenth century with Scott, Moore, Byron, Shelley, and Praed.<sup>1</sup>

Though the day of my destiny's over,  
And the star of my fate hath declined,  
Thy soft heart refused to discover  
The faults which so many could find;  
Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted,  
It shrunk not to share it with me,  
And the love which my spirit hath painted  
It never hath found but in thee. (BYRON.)

<sup>1</sup> In the earlier poems of Keats, feminine rimes are common—rather too common indeed, for they make the rhythm too effeminate in character. They were probably used deliberately as a help towards the rich effects of 'linked sweetness long drawn out', as well as to enter a practical protest against the monotonously masculine endings of the syllabic Augustan verse. But they were spasmodically frequent, and have not the same organic structural function as in the poets here mentioned. Burns, in such a poem as *The Holy Fair*, makes a far more persistent, though not quite regular, use of them.



I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden ;  
 Thou needest not fear mine ;  
 My spirit is too deeply laden  
 Ever to burthen thine.  
 I fear thy mien, thy tones, thy motion ;  
 Thou needest not fear mine ;  
 Innocent is the heart's devotion  
 With which I worship thine. (SHELLEY.)

Compare also the so-called amphibrachs of Byron's

O talk not to me of a name great in story ;  
 The days of our youth are the days of our glory ;  
 And the myrtle and ivy of sweet two-and-twenty  
 Are worth all your laurels, though ever so plenty.

This alternation of masculine and feminine rimes is a device which has added a new charm to the resources of English lyric poetry. Sometimes it is combined with an alternation of rising and falling cadence, as in Byron's

There be none of Beauty's daughters  
 With a magic like thee ;  
 And like music on the waters  
 Is thy sweet voice to me :  
 When, as if its sound were causing  
 The charmed ocean's pausing,  
 The waves lie still and gleaming,  
 And the lull'd winds seem dreaming :

Sometimes the rimes are predominantly disyllabic, as in Shelley's *Love's Philosophy* :

The fountains mingle with the river  
 And the rivers with the ocean,  
 The winds of heaven mix for ever  
 With a sweet emotion ;  
 Nothing in the world is single,  
 All things by a law divine  
 In one another's being mingle—  
 Why not I with thine ?

or entirely disyllabic, as in Scott's *Coronach* :

He is gone on the mountain,  
 He is lost to the forest,  
 Like a summer-dried fountain,  
 When our need was the sorest.  
 The font reappearing  
 From the raindrops shall borrow,  
 But to us comes no cheering,  
 To Duncan no morrow !

Amongst later poets, Swinburne has perhaps made the most remarkable use of these rimes—in the great chorus of *Atalanta* :

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,  
 The mother of months in meadow or plain  
 Fills the shadows and windy places  
 With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;

in *Hesperia* :

As the cross that a wild nun clasps till the edge of it bruises her bosom,  
 So love wounds as we grasp it, and blackens and burns as a flame;  
 I have loved overmuch in my life; when the live bud bursts with the  
 blossom,

Bitter as ashes or tears is the fruit, and the wine thereof shame.

and in *The Garden of Proserpine* :

From too much love of living,  
 From hope and fear set free,  
 We thank with brief thanksgiving  
 Whatever gods may be  
 That no life lives for ever;  
 That dead men rise up never;  
 That even the weariest river  
 Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Many other examples will be found in the *Shorter Poems* of Mr. Bridges, and Austin Dobson's *Vers de Société* and *At the Sign of the Lyre*.

Amongst disyllabic rimes must be distinguished what may be called true double rimes or full double rimes, i.e. rimes where the second syllable seems capable of carrying a secondary stress. The peculiar effectiveness of these rimes was perceived by Gay:

The schoolboy's desire is a pláydáy,  
 The schoolmaster's joy is to flog,  
 The milkmaid's delight is on Máy-dáy,  
 But mine is on sweet Molly Mog.

and by Moore, as in

Oft, in the stilly night,  
 Ere slumber's chain has bound mè,  
 Fond mem'ry brings the light  
 Of other days aróund mè.

and

Let Erin remember the days of old  
 Ere her faithless sons betrayéd hèr,  
 When Malachi wore the collar of gold,  
 Which he won from the proud inváder.

The final cadence of such lines as these is very different from that of

Though dárk are our sórrors, to-dáy we'll forgét them  
 And smíle through our téars like a súnbeam in shów'rs

and of

My géntle hárp, once móre I wáken  
 The swéetness of thy slúmb'ring stráin.

A similar cadence is suggested by the opening lines of Swinburne's *An Interlude*:

In the greenest growth of the Mǎytime,  
I rode where the woods were wet,  
Between the dawn and the dǎytime;  
The spring was glad that we met.

though the following stanzas do not seem to call for it in the same way.<sup>1</sup> The same is true of the second and some other stanzas of *Before Dawn*, of such a stanza of *Dolores* as

Dost thou dream of what was and no more is,  
The old kingdoms of earth and the kings?  
Dost thou hunger for these things; Dolores,  
For these, in a world of new things?  
But thy bosom no fasts could emaciate,  
No hunger compel to complain  
Those lips that no bloodshed could satiate,  
Our Lady of Pain.

An unusually full double rime occurs in the fourth stanza of Swinburne's *Baby-bird*:

Sorrow dies for love's sake,  
Love grows one with mirth,  
Even for one white dove's sake,  
Born a babe on earth.

One of the most systematic examples is:

There is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be,  
There are no hearts like English hearts,  
Such hearts of oak as they be.

iii. *Gliding, tumbling, or trisyllabic.* In the lighter forms of verse, the last metrically stressed syllable of a line is occasionally followed by two metrically unstressed syllables. This occurs in dactyls or in hypercatalectic iambs.

Her favourite science was the mathematical,  
Her noblest virtue was her magnanimity;  
Her wit (she sometimes tried at wit) was Attic all,  
Her serious sayings darkened to sublimity;  
In short, in all things she was fairly what I call  
A prodigy . . .

But—oh! ye lords of ladies *intellectual*,  
Inform us truly, have they not hen-pecked you all?  
(Byron, *Don Juan*, l. xii and xxii.)

Hood's *Bridge of Sighs*, however, shows that trisyllabic rimes may be used to produce pathos as well as levity:

<sup>1</sup> One of the later stanzas, for instance, has the rimes *flower, hour*, which hover between the masculine and feminine types.

Perishing gloomily,  
Spurred by contumely,  
Cold inhumanity,  
Burning insanity,  
Into her rest.

But ordinarily, especially when the rime is also 'broken', tumbling rime is somewhat of a *tour de force*, and is therefore used to secure a grotesque or humorous effect.

Barham's *Ingoldsby Legends* will give many examples:

The Conclave was full, and they'd not a spare hat, or he  
'd long since been Cardinal, Legate *a latere*,  
A dignity fairly his due, without flattery . . .

'My Lord,' said the King, 'here's a rather tough job,  
Which, it seems, of a sort is To puzzle our Cortes.

And since it has quite flabbergasted that Diet, I  
Look to your Grace with no little anxiety

Concerning a point Which has quite out of joint  
Put us all with respect to the good of society.' . . .

'Since your Majesty don't like the peas in the shoe—or to  
Travel—what say you to burning a Jew or two? . . .

And then for a Cook We have not far to look—  
Father Dominic's self, Sire, your own Grand Inquisitor,  
Luckily now at your Court is a visitor;  
Of his Rev'rence's functions there is not one weightier  
Than heretic-burning; in fact, 'tis his *métier*.

Besides Alguazils Who still follow his heels,  
He has always Familiars enough at his beck at home,  
To pick you up Hebrews enough for a hecatomb!  
And depend on it, Sire, such a glorious specific  
Would make every Queen throughout Europe prolific!'

In Chaucer there are a few examples of trisyllabic rimes in iambic lines that are syllabically normal, i. e. that have masculine endings. The riming syllables are the last two metrically stressed syllables of the line together with the intervening thesis, as in

I folwed ay myn inclinációun

By vertu of my constellációun (D. 615-16.)

and *vacációun, occupációun* (D. 683-4); *affleccióuns, proleccióuns* (F. 55-6). These might be called *compound rimes*. Cf. also Moore's song, 'The young May Moon', *look bríght, my déar, délight, my déar*.

Cases where the last two metrically stressed syllables rime in a pair of lines but not the intervening theses might be called *intermittent compound rimes*.

So hoot he lovede that by nýghtertále

He sleep namoore than dooth a nýghtyngále (A. 97-8.)

§ 9. There are also several kinds of *extended rime*. These occur when the accented riming syllables (whether identical or with differing initial consonants) are preceded by an unaccented syllable which is homophonous (i. e. either completely identical in sound or only with identical vowels). The final rime may be either masculine or feminine :

i. Extended masculine rimes, where the final arses are :

(a) true rimes—to *wéep*, to *sléep*; *the níght*, *the fíght*;

(β) identical rimes—*humílitée*, *advérsitée*; *améndemént*, *ésemént*; preceded by homophonous unaccented syllables. These might perhaps be called *reversed* or *rising-stress* disyllabic rimes.

ii. Extended feminine rimes, where the final arses are :

(a) true rimes—*abréggè*, *aléggè*; to *quýken*, to *stíken*; *bíforně*, *ibórně*;

(β) identical rimes—*aléngè*, *chaléngè*; preceded by homophonous theses.

§ 10. The accepted nomenclature of rimes—masculine, feminine, &c.—covers the most important kinds, but is not comprehensive, and new terms, not always quite self-explanatory, have to be invented for other varieties. For complete classification, therefore, the following system is suggested:—

1. Monosyllabic (masculine): to *scán*, *is mán*.

2. Disyllabic—(a) falling or trochaic (feminine): *sórrów*, *mórrów*;

(b) rising or iambic (extended masculine): to *wéep*, to *sléep*.

3. Trisyllabic—(a) falling or dactylic (gliding): *téndrly*, *sléndrly*.

(b) rising or anapaestic: to the *coúnt*, to the *foúnt*; <sup>1</sup> *fearful and sád*, *joyful and glád*.<sup>1</sup>

(c) falling-rising or cretic (compound): *inclínacióún*, *constellációún*; *bestów the méad*, *sów the séed*.<sup>1</sup>

[In Chaucer often identical in the second arsis, but rarely so in the first, *nyghtertále*, *nyghtingále* (intermittent compound).]

(d) rising-falling or amphibrachic (extended feminine): *but buílded*, *but gílded*; *and swállow*, *and hóllow*.

4. Quadrisyllabic—(a) double falling or ditrochaic: *néars to gréet her*, *féars to méet her*.<sup>1</sup>

(b) double rising or diambic: *rejeét the bád*, *refléct the sád*; <sup>1</sup> *is béaming*, *lóve*, *is gléaming*, *lóve*.

<sup>1</sup> Theoretic examples.

- To kill you till one stilled you,  
To kiss you till one killed you. (SWINBURNE.)

When you pay your gas and *poor rate*,  
Tip the rector, fee the *curate*.

she'll be nice hence-  
Forward, and there is no great cause to quake ;  
This liberty is a poetic licence,  
Which some irregularity may make  
In the design, and as I have a high sense  
Of Aristotle and the Rules . . . (Byron, *Don Juan*, l. cxx.)

Thou wast the daughter of my tutor, law professor at the University of Göttingen;

Who would not give all else for two pennyworth only of beautiful soup?

'Oh! take it,' she cries; 'but secure every document.'—  
'A bargain,' says Maurice,—'including the stock you meant?'  
But a régular Broomstick—you'll find that the favourite—  
Above all, when, like Robin, you haven't to pay for it.

<sup>1</sup> Theoretic example.

§ 12. Difference of effect is also secured by different arrangements of the riming sounds. The commonest structures with full lines are :

i. *Couplet rime* (*a a b b c c*)—the first and second riming together, third and fourth, and so on.

The simple Wordsworth, framer of a lay  
As soft as evening in his favourite May,  
Who warns his friend 'to shake off toil and trouble,  
And quit his books, for fear of growing double';  
Who, both by precept and example, shows  
That prose is verse, and verse is merely prose.

ii. *Alternating, or interlaced, or cross rime* (*a b a b*), the first and third lines riming together, second and fourth, and so on :

The Curfew tolls the knell of parting day,  
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,  
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,  
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

iii. *Intermittent rime* (*a b c b*), the second and fourth lines riming together, but not the first and third :

It is an Ancient Mariner,  
And he stoppeth one of three.  
'By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,  
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?'

iv. *Enclosing rime* (*a b b a*), the first and fourth lines riming together, forming as it were a framework to enclose the second and third, which themselves rime together :

Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud  
Not of war only, but detractions rude,  
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,  
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed.

v. *Tail rime* or *rime couée* (*a a b a a b* or *a a b c c b*), two couplets (or triplets) usually on different rimes, each followed by a tail, usually a shorter verse, the two tails riming together :

Y-born he was in fer contree,  
In Flaundries, al biyonde the see,  
At Poper yng, in the place;  
His fader was a man ful free,  
And lord he was of that contree  
As it was Goddes grace. . . .  
And over that a fyn hawberk  
Was al y-wrought of Jewis werk,  
Ful strong it was of plate;  
And over that his cote-armour,  
As whit as is a lilye-flour,  
In which he wol depate.

It will be seen that Chaucer's *Tale of Sir Thopas*, from which these examples are taken, has both *a a b a a b* and *a a b c c b*.

In Shelley's *Arethusa* the 'tail' is longer than the other verses :

And now from their fountains  
In Enna's mountains,  
Down one vale where the morning basks,  
Like friends once parted  
Grown single-hearted,  
They ply their watery tasks.  
At sunrise they leap  
From their cradles steep  
In the cave of the shelving hill ;  
At noon-tide they flow  
Through the woods below  
And the meadows of asphodel ;  
And at night they sleep  
In the rocking deep  
Beneath the Ortygian shore ;—  
Like spirits that lie  
In the azure sky  
When they love but live no more.

Several other forms of 'tailed' rimes are to be found, e.g. *a a a c b b b c*, as in Calverley's *Ode to Tobacco*, or *a a a b a b*, as in one of Burns's favourite stanzas :

Thou who, when fears attack,  
Bid'st them avaunt, and Black  
Care, at the horseman's back  
Perching, unseatest ;  
Sweet, when the morn is gray ;  
Sweet, when they've cleared away  
Lunch ; and at close of day  
Possibly sweetest.  
Wee, sleekit, cowrin', tim'rous beastie,  
O, what a panic's in thy breastie !  
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,  
Wi' bickering brattle !  
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee  
Wi' murd'ring pattle !

§ 13. Rime may, of course, mark the end of half-lines or other metrical sections. This *internal rime* occurs frequently but spasmodically in *The Ancient Mariner* :

The guests are met, the feast is set,  
The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared  
Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,  
The glorious Sun uprist :  
Then all averred, I had killed the bird  
That brought the fog and mist.



'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,  
That bring the fog and mist.

There are different structural arrangements of this internal rime, corresponding to those of final rime.

i. *Leonine verse rime* connects the first and second halves of one line,<sup>1</sup> as in the examples above; and in

The splendour *falls* on castle *walls*  
And snowy summits old in story :  
The long light *shakes* across the *lakes*,  
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.

(Tennyson, *The Princess*.)

I am the daughter of earth and water  
And the nursling of the sky.  
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores,  
I change, but I cannot die.  
For after the rain when with never a stain  
The pavilion of heaven is bare,  
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams  
Build up the blue dome of air,  
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,  
And out of the caverns of rain,  
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,  
I arise and unbuild it again. (Shelley, *The Cloud*.)

ii. *Interlaced medial and final rime* (*rime brisée*)—the first sections of two verses riming together, and the second sections also riming on a different sound :

I have lived long enough, having *seen* one thing, that love hath an *end* ;  
Goddess and maiden and *queen*, be near me now and *befriend*.  
Thou art more than the day or the *morrow*, the seasons that laugh or  
that *weep* ;

For these give joy and *sorrow* ; but thou, Proserpina, *sleep*.  
(Swinburne, *Hymn to Proserpine*.)

iii. *Sectional rime*—two internal sections of each line riming together, as well as the separate final couplet rime :

England, *queen* of the waves whose *green* inviolate girdle enrings thee  
round,  
Mother *fair* as the morning, *where* is now the place of thy foemen  
found ? (Swinburne, *The Armada*.)

At *Flores* in the *Azores* Sir Richard Grenville lay  
(Tennyson, *The Revenge*.)

<sup>1</sup> This *vers léonin* was sometimes by French prosodists said to have *rime renforcée* to distinguish it from the *rime léonine*, which was a kind of extended rime.

§ 14. *Epanaphora*, or repetition of the same words at the beginning of several successive lines, has frequently a fine effect, as in Tennyson's *Holy Grail*:

Fainter by day, but always in the night  
 Blood-red, and sliding down the blacken'd marsh  
 Blood-red, and on the naked mountain top  
 Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere below  
 Blood-red.

Compare also in *The Princess*:

And partly that I hoped to win you back,  
 And partly conscious of my own deserts,  
 And partly that you were my civil head,  
 And chiefly you were born for something great,

Similarly five successive lines in *The Marriage of Geraint* commence with *Forgetful of*, and four in Keats's *Isabella* (st. liii) with *And she forgot*.

Matthew Arnold uses this device frequently, though with less emphatic words, as in *Stagirius*, and *The Forsaken Merman* (ll. 46-9).

§ 15. The same verse or same phrase at the end of a verse recurring regularly after a certain number of lines, so as to mark off stanzas, is called a *Refrain*.

- (α) Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,  
 Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
 Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
 In looking on the happy autumn-fields,  
 And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail  
 That brings our friends up from the underworld,  
 Sad as the last which reddens over one  
 That sinks with all we love below the verge;  
 So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

(Tennyson, *The Princess*.)

Similarly the last line in each stanza of one of Moore's songs ('As slow our ship') ends with the words 'left behind us', and one by Burns with 'Highland Mary'.

- (β) He quits his mule, and mounts his horse,  
 And through the street directs his course;  
 Through the street of Zacatin  
 To the Alhambra spurring in.

Woe is me, Alhama!

And when the Alhambra walls he gain'd  
On the moment he ordain'd  
That the trumpet straight should sound  
With the silver clarion round.

Woe is me, Alhama! (BYRON.)

In the first case the refrain is a part of the last line of the stanza, in the second it stands rather outside and apart from the stanza.

Similarly in a song from Tennyson's *Princess* each stanza ends with the line :

Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

The splendour falls on castle walls

And snowy summits old in story:

The long light shakes across the lakes,

And the wild cataract leaps in glory.

Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,

Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,

And thinner, clearer, farther going!

O sweet and far from cliff and scar

The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!

Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:

Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,

They faint on hill or field or river:

Our echoes roll from soul to soul,

And grow for ever and for ever.

Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,

And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

In another song from *The Princess*, the refrain 'Ask me no more' is not only the last line of each stanza, but also part of the first line of each. So too in Burns's famous song, each stanza commences with 'John Anderson my jo, John', and ends with 'John Anderson, my jo'; and in a hunting song by Scott each stanza save the last commences and ends with 'Waken, lords and ladies gay'.

Not infrequently there is an internal refrain as well as the final one, as in Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott*:

On either side the river lie

Long fields of barley and of rye,

That clothe the wold and meet the sky;

And thro' the field the road runs by

To many-tower'd Camelot;

And up and down the people go,

Gazing where the lilies blow

Round an island there below,

The island of Shalott.

where, although the other words vary, the fifth and ninth lines always end with *Camelot* and *Shalott*, save in two stanzas, where Lancelot replaces Camelot and Shalott.

In *The Sisters* the double refrain is constant, save that for *blowing* other words, *howling*, *roaring*, *raging*, are sometimes substituted.

We were two daughters of one race,  
 She was the fairest in the face:  
     The wind is blowing in turret and tree.  
 They were together, and she fell;  
 Therefore revenge became me well.  
     O the Earl was fair to see.  
 She died: she went to burning flame:  
 She mixed her ancient blood with shame.  
     The wind is howling in turret and tree.  
 Whole weeks and months, and early and late,  
 To win his love I lay in wait.  
     O the Earl was fair to see.

Rossetti's *Troy Town* has both final and internal refrain:

Heaven-born Helen, Sparta's queen,  
     (*O Troy Town!*)  
 Had two breasts of heavenly sheen,  
 The sun and moon of the heart's desire:  
 All Love's lordship lay between.  
     (*O Troy's down,*  
     *Tall Troy's on fire!*)

In the stanzas of *Sister Helen*, the second, fifth, sixth, and the second half of the seventh line remain constantly unchanged, while the first half of the seventh line varies.

'Why did you melt your waxen man,  
     Sister Helen?  
 To-day is the third since you began.'  
 'The time was long, yet the time ran,  
     Little brother.'  
     (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*  
     *Three days to-day, between Hell and Heaven!*)

*Eden Bower* has two separate internal refrains alternating in successive stanzas.

It was Lilith the wife of Adam:  
     (*Sing Eden Bower!*)  
 Not a drop of her blood was human,  
 But she was made like a soft sweet woman.  
 Lilith stood on the skirts of Eden;  
     (*Alas the hour!*)  
 She was the first that thence was driven;  
 With her was hell and with Eve was heaven.

While some of these refrains, like 'Sing Eden Bower' and those of *Troy Town*, *John Anderson*, and the internal refrain of *Sister Helen*, are mere repetitions of a phrase or a name, having hardly more than their sound value, others give an echo, more or less monotonous, of the emotional key-note of the song, and their value lies largely in their emphasizing of the mood which is the real nucleus of the poem, as in 'Tears, idle tears' and the *Bugle Song*. In *Sister Helen* the variable part of the refrain expresses the inner and instinctive comment of Helen on the various stages through which the situation is developed, as though she were a horror-stricken but helpless spectator of her own action.

In many songs, as for instance those of Burns, a whole stanza is used as refrain or chorus, e.g. 'Lassie wi' the Lint-white Locks' or 'My Heart's in the Highlands', and so too in Rossetti's 'The Cloud Confines'. Similarly each eight-line stanza of Tennyson's *Mariana in the South* is followed by a quatrain in which the lines always end with *moan, morn, alone, forlorn* (an obvious reflection of mood), although their content varies.

The origin of the refrain is doubtless to be found in the days when poetry was improvised, and the singer required a rest in which to collect his thoughts for the next stage. But in any case its present metrical value lies firstly in the element of repetition, and secondly in its function of holding the structure together and clinching it firmly and decisively, so concentrating the poetic energy and intensifying the metrical effect; while, thirdly, it may serve the purpose of emphasizing some important emotional aspect of the poem.

## XVII

### THE STANZA

§ 1. *Stanzas* or *strophes*<sup>1</sup> are units of tertiary rhythm in poetry, unitary groups of verses combined according to a uniform and more or less symmetrical pattern, the structural arrangement being usually marked by rime. Rime is not essential (see for example

<sup>1</sup> *Stanza*—'so named from the stop or halt at the end of it . . . Cognate with Eng. "stand"' (Skeat, *Etymological Dict.*). *Strophe* means literally a turning.

Collins's *Ode to Evening*); but the lines occupying corresponding positions in the stanza must also correspond in length and rhythmical structure. This correspondence is accentuated by similarity in rime-scheme, so that rime may play an organic part in the moulding of stanzas. Each stanza in the series has usually, then, one system of riming sounds different in quality from, but uniform in scheme of arrangement with, that of the preceding and following stanzas.

Verse may be written continuously, i. e. without entering into specific structural groups, or having any fixed structural unit larger than the line,<sup>1</sup> as in the case of heroic blank verse (sometimes called stichic verse), or it may be written in definite strophic or stanzaic forms.

§ 2. The smallest possible group is obviously one of two lines. Verse riming in couplets is of course very common in English poetry, but it must be remembered that in poems where frequent use is made of enjambement in the strict sense (v. Ch. IV, § 6) and rime-breaking (v. Index), the lines have a continuity of movement almost like that of blank verse. Take, for instance, the familiar verses from Keats quoted in Ch. IV, § 5, or the opening lines of his *Endymion*. It is doubtful whether the term couplet could justifiably be applied in its strict meaning to the structure of these lines. In Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, on the other hand, the couplet is normally self-contained and expresses a complete thought, the end of the sentence coinciding with the end of the verse, so that there is a distinct approach to stanzaic effect. And it seems extremely probable that this was their deliberate aim, since Dryden, rightly or wrongly, gave Waller the praise of having 'first showed us how to conclude the sense most commonly in distichs, which in the verse of those before him runs on for so many lines together that the reader is out of breath to overtake it'. The preface to an edition of Waller's poems published posthumously in 1690, says that before his time 'their verses ran all into one another, and hung together . . . like the *hook't atoms* that compose a body in Des Cartes. There was no distinction of parts, no regular stops, nothing for the ear to rest upon. . . . Mr. Waller remov'd all these faults, brought in more polysyllables, and smoother measures; bound up his thoughts better, and in a cadence more agreeable to the nature of the verse

<sup>1</sup> The qualifying words *specific* and *fixed* are important here, for 'verse-paragraphs' are without doubt organic units, but they are determined less by formal harmonic conditions than by the unifying action of thought and feeling.

he wrote in : so that where-ever the natural stops of that were, he contrived the little breakings of his sense so as to fall in with 'em. And for that reason since the stress of our verse lies commonly upon the last syllable, you'll hardly ever find him using [a] word of no force there.'

In Tennyson's *Locksley Hall* the couplets are separated in the printing, thus giving notice to the eye of the poet's evident intention.

§ 3. With regard to the aesthetic value of the stanzaic structure, at least in the larger stanzas, there is, firstly, the pleasure of anticipated recurrence both of rhythm and rime, more complex and on a larger scale than hitherto. Secondly, there is scope not merely for accumulative but for larger harmonic effects, especially when lines of different lengths are used, and refrains.

On Linden, when the sun was low,  
All bloodless lay the untrodden snow,  
And dark as winter was the flow  
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,  
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd  
On lips that are for others; deep as love,  
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;  
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

The flower that smiles to-day  
To-morrow dies;  
All that we wish to stay  
Tempt and then flies.  
What is this world's delight?  
Lightning that mocks the night,  
Brief even as bright.

O World! O Life! O Time!  
On whose last steps I climb,  
Trembling at that where I had stood before;  
When will return the glory of your prime?  
No more—Oh, never more!

Out of the day and night  
A joy has taken flight;  
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar  
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight  
No more—Oh, never more!

In these examples the whole emotional force of the stanza is felt to be working up to a culminating point in the last line, so that at

no previous point could the rhythmical movement close with the same aesthetic satisfaction. The full imaginative significance of the content is held in suspense until the metrical structure is also complete.

This aspect of stanzaic effect, which must be felt by every one even in the isolated stanzas quoted above, and much more in the whole poems, is finely expressed with reference to one particular form in Theodore Watts-Dunton's famous sonnet :

A sonnet is a wave of melody :  
From heaving waters of the impassioned soul  
A billow of tidal music one and whole  
Flows in the 'octave'; then, returning free,  
Its ebbing surges in the 'sestet' roll  
Back to the deeps of Life's tumultuous sea.

Thirdly, there is further scope for conflict or interplay between the metrical and rhetorical structure, while at the same time a certain limit is set. There may be internal variety with external unity; phrases and clauses now coinciding with, now passing over the line-endings, but nearly always coinciding at the end of the stanza; not running on without check as in blank verse. Some excellent examples of this are provided by Milton's sonnets, on which see below, Ch. XXII, § 9.

§ 4. In general, stanzas which are as long as, or longer than, the rime-royal lend themselves to the full development of successive ideas and feelings, while at the same time the fixed structural scheme tends to act as a natural check to undue elaboration. At the same time the natural pauses invited at regular intervals by the stanza form give a metrical resting-point, which prevents that exhausting strain on the attention that is sometimes felt in blank verse with continual overflow. On the other hand, of course, poverty of idea or tenuity of feeling is a source of weakness to the longer stanza forms, as forms, on account of the temptation to fill up with mere verbiage. The occasional judicious use of overflow from stanza to stanza will obviate the difficulty to some extent, but excessive use of this device would destroy the integrity of the stanza form. In all cases a final couplet, which may be abrupt or not, according to the way in which it is led up to, will give a decisive ending to the stanza.

The shorter forms of stanza, particularly the couplet and quatrain, favour concentrated strength of expression, and often give the effect of combined rapidity and emphasis of movement. Their great danger is abruptness. In so far as enjambement is



used between the couplets this danger is avoided; the closeness of the rimes is not so insistent, but the stanza effect is proportionately weakened.

Blank verse does not suffer from these limitations; but on the other hand it loses the supports given by stanzaic form, and, as Shelley said, it gives 'no shelter for mediocrity'—it requires unflinching judgement and aesthetic resource.

The most important formal criteria for a poetically effective stanza are: (a) that it must not be so long that it cannot be grasped as a unified whole, and similarly its structure must not be so ingeniously intricate that attention is distracted from its intellectual and emotional significance; and (b) that it must not be so short that it does not give scope for some variety and complexity of harmonic effect, such as is provided by the balancing of lines of different lengths, by reversals of cadence, change of tempo, and the alternation of single and double end-rimes, &c. In general the most successful stanzas apart from what may be regarded as whole poems of fixed form, like the sonnet, are not shorter and simpler than the quatrain, nor longer and more complex than the nine-line Spenserian stanza; and within these limits there is ample scope for the poet to give artistic individuality to his stanzaic forms, by means of the devices mentioned above, which will be further elaborated in detail in connexion with the more important strophic schemes.

§ 5. The full possibilities of these devices have probably not even yet been exhausted. Many new harmonic combinations were made by the Romantics, and most remarkably by Shelley; but despite the wonderful new creations of Swinburne, yet further resources are revealed in such a poem as Mr. Abercrombie's *Hymn to Love*:

Yea, made of chance and all a labouring strife,  
 We go charged with a strong flame;  
 For as a language Love hath seized on life  
     His burning heart to story.  
 Yea, Love, we are thine, the liturgy of thee,  
 Thy thought's golden and glad name,  
 The mortal conscience of immortal glee,  
     Love's zeal in Love's own glory.

Whether we call this an eight-lined stanza or a pair of linked quatrains is of little importance. The first and third lines of the separate quatrains rime together and are of five feet. The two second lines of four feet correspond both in rime and in the

internal cadence with its lingering emphasis, and similarly the two three-foot fourth lines correspond both in rhythmical structure and their feminine rimes.

Simpler than this in its elements but with a sad, haunting melody of its own is the lyric by Ernest Dowson with the title *Non sum qualis eram bonae sub regno Cynarae*:

I have forgot much, Cynara! gone with the wind,  
 Flung roses, roses riotously with the throng,  
 Dancing to put thy pale lost lilies out of mind;  
 But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,  
 Yea all the time because the dance was long.  
 I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

The melody of this cannot be fully analysed, but part of its undying music depends, so far as formal structure is concerned, on the shorter fifth line between the constant refrain of the fourth and sixth lines, which are repeated in each stanza and contain, as a true refrain should do, the emotional nucleus of the whole.

Even more perfect perhaps is the exquisite music of *O Mors! quam amara est memoria tua* . . .

Exceeding sorrow  
 Consumeth my sad heart!  
 Because to-morrow  
 We must depart,  
 Now is exceeding sorrow  
 All my part!

with its delicate interweaving of single and double rimes, its subtle and quiet changes of line length, and especially the suggestive shortness of the final line, after the repetition of the first as part of the fifth.

§ 6. There are many lyrical poems where no use is made of rime in the body of the stanza, but where the end, and sometimes the beginning, of each stanza is marked by some repetition of a sound or a word, as in the song 'Now sleeps the crimson petal', in Tennyson's *Princess*, in which each stanza commences with *now* and ends with *me*. Or the end of the stanza may be marked by a refrain embodied in the last line, as 'the days that are no more' in 'Tears, idle tears'; or in the first line, as in 'Our enemies have fall'n'.

Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;  
 Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;  
 Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:  
 The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,  
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,  
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves  
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,  
And slips into the bosom of the lake:  
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip  
Into my bosom and be lost in me.

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,  
Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
In looking on the happy Autumn fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,  
That brings our friends up from the underworld,  
Sad as the last which reddens over one  
That sinks with all we love below the verge;  
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns  
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds  
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;  
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,  
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd  
On lips that are for others; deep as love,  
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;  
O Death in Life. the days that are no more.

Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they came,  
The woodmen with their axes: lo, the tree!  
But we will make it fagots for the hearth,  
And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,  
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they struck;  
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew  
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain:  
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,  
Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder-blade.

Our enemies have fall'n, but this shall grow  
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth  
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power; and roll'd  
With music in the growing breeze of Time,  
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs  
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

But stanzas without rime in any shape are also to be found. Like the Greek Sapphic and Alcaic stanzas and the 4th and 5th Asclepiads they depend on the use of lines differing in length and metrical structure. The use of the final short line in particular, in rimed or unrimed forms, must have been frequently suggested by the Adonius of the Sapphic stanza. The stanzas of Collins's *Ode to Evening* have regularly two five-foot lines followed by two three-foot lines, all in iambic metre :

Then lead, calm vot'ress, where some sheety lake  
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallow'd pile  
Or upland fallows grey  
Reflect its last cool gleam.

Another scheme is shown by Sir William Watson's *England my Mother*, where the masculine ending of the fourth line, in contrast with the feminine endings of the first three, clearly marks the end of the stanza. There are three two-foot lines, each composed of a dactyl and a trochee—the Greek Adonius—followed by one composed of a dactyl and a monosyllabic foot :

England my mother,  
Wardress of waters,  
Builder of peoples,  
Maker of men.

§ 7. A stanza, or at least one of the larger and more elaborate stanzas, is usually complete in itself, a self-contained whole. Shelley, however, above all others, is fond of allowing his stanzas to overflow, not merely in his *terza rima*, where it is common, but in the Spenserian stanzas of *The Revolt of Islam* :

and many a band  
The Arctic Anarch sent, and Idumea's sand,

VI

Fertile in prodigies and lies. (Canto x.)  
'Ha! hear'st thou not the tread

XII

Of rushing feet? (Canto xi.)

and in shorter stanzas, as in a chorus from *Hellas* :

Love were lust—if Liberty

III

Lent not life its soul of Light

and in *To a Skylark* :

Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

v

Keen as are the arrows  
Of that silver sphere,

and in *The Sensitive Plant*, stanzas 15 and 16. Cf. also Byron, *Don Juan*, II. vi-vii, ccx-ccxi; III. xlii-xliii; IV. lii-liii. Tennyson's *In Memoriam* has many stanzaic enjambements, section lxxxvi having four stanzas of which three do not end even with a pause that could be marked by a comma :

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,  
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom  
Of evening over brake and bloom  
And meadow, slowly breathing bare  
The round of space, and rapt below  
Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,  
And shadowing down the horned flood  
In ripples, fan my brows and blow  
The fever from my cheek, and sigh  
The full new life that feeds thy breath  
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,  
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly  
From belt to belt of crimson seas  
On leagues of odour streaming far,  
To where in yonder orient star  
A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace'.

§ 8. Stanzas are sometimes classified as *isometrical* or *anisometrical* according as the component lines are equal or unequal.

According to the poetic theory of Provence and Italy, stanzas or short complete poems like *canzoni* were divisible into certain recognized parts, and were generally regarded as definitely bipartite or tripartite. In the latter case the body of the stanza was usually the opening portion, which was divisible into two equal parts called *pedes*, the conclusion being called the *cauda*. Sometimes this arrangement was reversed, and the *frons* was followed by two equal *versus*. This system may have some interest in connexion with Middle English lyrics or imitations of Italian or Provençal, but there is nothing to be gained from applying it to a modern poem like Wordsworth's *Daffodils*, and saying that its scheme, *a b a b c c*, represents two *pedes*, *a b*, *a b*, and a *cauda*, *c c*. It was in fact applied primarily to the musical setting, the two *pedes* (or *versus*) corresponding to the same melody. (See Dante, *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, II. ix. et seq.)

## XVIII

## VERS LIBRES

§ 1. We have seen that in most poetry there is both primary rhythm and secondary rhythm, if not also tertiary rhythm. In other words, there is a more or less continuous stream of speech-sound characterized by that regular wave-like rise and fall which we call rhythm (primary rhythm); and this is organized in regularly proportionate sections—lines, or verses—marked off more or less distinctly from each other; and there may also be a further systematic grouping of these lines into stanzas of determinate length. In some types of verse-composition, however, while the primary rhythm is unmistakable, the secondary rhythm may be quite indeterminate, the rhythmical sound-sequence may be divided into irregular lengths. The organizing principle may be not a regular temporal proportion in the volume of sound, but the creative feeling—emotion, or emotional thought and imagination—of the poet; though this may sometimes be forced or disregarded for the sake (apparently) of contrast between long and short lines, or other effects of sound, so that there seems to be no law save the will of the poet that shapeth as it listeth.

§ 2. Similarly, instead of stanzas being moulded in accordance with a symmetrical harmonic scheme, the stanzaic unit really becomes that of the verse-paragraph. 'The arrangement of the rhymes and the length of the lines in any rhymed metrical passage may be determined either by a fixed stanzaic law or by a law infinitely deeper—by the law which impels the soul, in a state of poetic exaltation, to seize hold of every kind of metrical aid, such as rhyme, caesura, &c., for the purpose of accentuating and marking off each shade of emotion as it arises, regardless of any demands of stanza.' Watts-Dunton, after making this important distinction, points out the immense difference between 'the irregularity of makeshift' as in Cowley's so-called Pindarics, and the irregularity of Coleridge's 'fine frenzy' in *Kubla Khan*, where 'having broken away from all restraints of couplet and stanza—having caused his rhymes and pauses to fall just where and just when the emotion demands that they should fall, scorning the exigencies of makeshift no less than the exigencies of stanza—he has found what every writer of irregular English odes has sought in vain, a music as entrancing, as natural, and at the same time as

inscrutable as the music of the winds or of the sea' (*Enc. Brit.*, art. *Poetry*). As Coleridge himself said in a different connexion, 'this variation is not introduced wantonly or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition in the nature of the imagery or the passion'.

§ 3. Milton's *Lycidas* is one of our earliest poems of great importance to show divergence from a uniform metrical scheme in its short lines<sup>1</sup> and in what Johnson called its 'uncertain' rhymes and its occasional blank lines. The structural principle is that of 'free musical paragraphs'; and Milton's fine ear enabled him to arrange his rimes so skilfully and produce cadences so exquisite that we cannot seriously quarrel with Landor's opinion that 'no poetry so harmonious had ever been written in our language'—none at least will deny that this is nearer the mark than Johnson's astonishing denunciation of its 'unpleasing numbers'. There is a definite base-metre, viz. the heroic line, and the irregularities are introduced not merely for the negative purpose of avoiding monotony, but also for the positive end of marking some emotional change or emphasizing some aspect of the thought-movement, as well as to gain a definite verbal harmony. The variations must not be arbitrary—having no significant, emotional reason; but everything must be the work of the creative spirit's plastic stress.

§ 4. With regard to the mere external sound-scheme of irregular metres it is true in general that the fewer variations there are from a base-metre and a standard rime-sequence, the more effective they will be; and where irregularity is almost made the rule a valuable source of effect is lost, and regularity will come to have much the same value as was attached to departures from a normal arrangement. In fact the use of irregular metres is sometimes more artificial and arbitrary, more of a convention, than adherence to a definitely chosen form of stanza; and it is a convention which may lead the poet astray as often as it helps him. The variations in length of verse, metrical movement, and rime sequences in Wordsworth's great *Intimations of Immortality Ode* are not always inevitable. Wordsworth, as Professor Bradley said, 'could not command the tone of sustained rapture, and where his metrical form is irregular his ear is uncertain'. One reason for the greater success of the *Ode to Duty* is the support given by a regular and

<sup>1</sup> Milton was anticipated by Drummond in learning from Italy the harmonic value of the three-foot line in combination with the five-foot:

not too complex stanza form, just as the definite limits of the sonnet structure prevented him from dissipating his poetic strength in amorphous diffuseness.<sup>1</sup>

§ 5. In irregular metres the rime has an important function, not merely in gratifying the expectation of recurrence, but also in holding the verse-paragraph more tightly together. *Vers libres* in discarding rime forgo an invaluable means of intensifying the antiphonies and setting off more clearly the varied cadences. Unrime *vers libres*, in fact, might almost as well be written continuously like prose (for the primary rhythm would be equally manifest in that form), were it not for the presumption that they are so divided to give effect to the poet's desire to balance the cadence of one section of the rhythmical continuum against that of neighbouring sections. The division into these sections (lines or verses) will often be guided by the phrase or thought-grouping, but on the other hand there will often be intentional overflow so that sense and sound may set each other in relief.

§ 6. When rime is absent, even more than when it is present, strength of phrase and rhythmic energy are demanded, and, above all, certainty of ear. Only thus can a poet compensate for the loss of that deep aesthetic pleasure which results from the recognition of recurrences and from the satisfaction of the instinctive craving for some principle of unity amidst variety, of law amidst disorder and chaos. The control and support of a law that manifests itself by prescribing determinate and symmetrical forms and patterns can only be dispensed with in obedience to the imperious insistence of an internal law that expresses itself in the one throbbing rhythm which alone will illuminate the fullness of the poet's thought and feeling.

§ 7. Rimeless irregular verse was used continuously by Southey in *Thalaba*, partly in the belief that it gave a wider range of expression, and partly in deliberate revolt against the obtrusive 'Jew's harp twing-twang' of the heroic measure. The bold individualism of the new movement in poetry was bound to consider, at least experimentally, these wayward and lawless rhythms as peculiarly suited to the treatment of a wild romantic subject, to the embodiment of evasive phantasies, to the passionate exposition of an irresponsible idealism, to the expression of a distracting sense of

<sup>1</sup> Though in the sonnet Wordsworth relaxed more than Milton the strict scheme of the Italians.



the overwhelming chaos of life and death, or of the fearful havoc of war. Thus we have the irregular measures—some with rime, some without—of *Kubla Khan*, *The Curse of Kehama*, *Thalaba*, *Queen Mab*, Tennyson's early *Sea-Fairies*, and *Eleanore*, and many parts of *Maud*, Arnold's *Strayed Reveller* and *The Forsaken Merman* and *Empedocles on Etna*, Patmore's *Amelia*, some poems of Henley, Francis Thompson's *Hound of Heaven*, and, one of the latest, Mr. Gilbert Frankau's *City of Fear*. And it was natural too that the romantic age should have revived the irregular pseudo-Pindaric form of Ode practised by Cowley and Dryden.

§ 8. But in all this work except that of the very greatest the absence of support from a determinate form has been a constant source of metrical weakness even while the flexibility of the medium has given scope for some very fine effects. When the poet's command of rhythm is as fluctuating and spasmodic as was Southey's, the capricious divisions of verse merely tend to produce a baffling impression of shapelessness, which suggests that, even by the strongest poets, metrical life could never be sustained at full vigour in these irregular measures throughout a long composition. Its possibility there and its success in pieces of only moderate length will probably be in proportion to the dominance of some base-metre throughout the paragraph-sections, to which the rhythm always returns after its apparent vagaries, so that the changes in cadence and variations from the standard will be the more effective when they do occur;<sup>1</sup> in other words, it will be in proportion to the degree of recognition that is given to the principle of recurrence on a larger scale than that of the feet, i.e. to the principle of secondary as well as of primary rhythm.

§ 9. It was natural and right that there should be an attempt to restore the freer melody and cadence of the phrase, which had too often been cramped by the controlled metrical structure of the line; but the line too has its own possibilities of music, and to secure the one it is not necessary to neglect the other. The two are complementary rather than antagonistic. Shakespeare and Milton, to mention no others, have shown that in heroic blank verse the claims both of the phrase and of the line can be reconciled, and the two forces joined to produce the finest harmonies of which our language is capable.

<sup>1</sup> See *Lycidas* and Swinburne's *Thalassius*, and *On the Cliffs*.

## 10.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

ODE ON INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM  
RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,  
The earth, and every common sight

To me did seem

Apparell'd in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream.

It is not now as it hath been of yore;—

Turn wheresoe'er I may,

By night or day,

The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The rainbow comes and goes,

And lovely is the rose;

The moon doth with delight

Look round her when the heavens are bare;

Waters on a starry night

Are beautiful and fair;

The sunshine is a glorious birth;

But yet I know, where'er I go,

That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,

And while the young lambs bound

As to the tabor's sound,

To me alone there came a thought of grief:

A timely utterance gave that thought relief,

And I again am strong.

The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;

No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;

I hear the echoes through the mountains throng,

The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,

And all the earth is gay;

Land and sea

Give themselves up to jollity,

And with the heart of May

Doth every beast keep holiday;—

Thou child of joy,

Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy Shepherd-boy!

Wordsworth undoubtedly commences his great Ode on a high level of metrical execution; this, however, is not maintained. In the middle of the next stanza he seems to have lost the visionary gleam and the glory of which he speaks at its close, and in particular the poverty of the line

On every side

is only made more glaring by its shortness. Another example of

weakness amounting to a kind of metrical anti-climax is the short final couplet

As if his whole vocation  
Were endless imitation

where the rime falling on mere suffixes results only in a commonplace jingle. Again, what a difference there is between the fine cadence of

Thou whose exterior semblance doth belie  
Thy soul's immensity;

where the transition from a long to a short line has full artistic justification, and the flatness of the short couplet

Mighty Prophet! seer blest!  
On whom these truths do rest

for which there is no aesthetic reason, unless that they might be magnificently redeemed by the simple and satisfying dignity of

Which we are toiling all our lives to find.

#### THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

Come, dear children, let us away;  
Down and away below!  
Now my brothers call from the bay,  
Now the great winds shoreward blow,  
Now the salt tides seaward flow;  
Now the wild white horses play,  
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.  
Children dear, let us away!  
This way, this way!  
Call her once before you go,—  
Call once yet!  
In a voice that she will know:  
'Margaret! Margaret!'  
Children's voices should be dear  
(Call once more) to a mother's ear;  
Children's voices, wild with pain,—  
Surely she will come again!  
Call her once and come away;  
This way, this way!  
'Mother dear, we cannot stay!'  
The wild white horses foam and fret.  
Margaret! Margaret!  
Come, dear children, come away down;  
Call no more!  
One last look at the white-walled town,  
And the little gray church on the windy shore,  
Then come down!  
She will not come, though you call all day;  
Come away, come away! . . .  
Down, down, down!  
Down to the depths of the sea!

She sits at her wheel in the humming town,  
 Singing most joyfully.  
 Hark what she sings: 'O joy, O joy,  
 For the humming street, and the child with its toy:  
 For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well;  
 For the wheel where I spun,  
 And the blessed light of the sun!'  
 And so she sings her fill,  
 Singing most joyfully,  
 Till the spindle drops from her hand,  
 And the whizzing wheel stands still.  
 She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,  
 And over the sand at the sea;  
 And her eyes are set in a stare;  
 And anon there breaks a sigh,  
 And anon there drops a tear,  
 From a sorrow-clouded eye,  
 And a heart sorrow-laden,  
 A long, long sigh  
 For the cold strange eyes of a little mermaiden,  
 And the gleam of her golden hair.

There is no need for comment on the rhythmical beauty of this, with its 'mixture of mortal sorrow with the strange, wild sense of a life that is not after mortal law—the childlike moan after lost love mingling with the pure outer note of a song not human'; but it is not superfluous to point out with what exquisite fitness the rimes are placed and the lines lengthened or shortened, for nothing could be better adapted to the subject than this forlorn music which has in it 'the pathos of natural things . . . the cry of a creature astray in the world, wild and gentle and mournful . . . the wail of something lost midway between man's life and the life of things soulless'.

To read after this even the finest chorus from *Merope* ('O Son and Mother . . .') and *The Strayed Reveller* is to realize how inevitably (I quote Swinburne again) 'to throw away the natural grace of rime from a modern song is a wilful abdication of half the power and half the charm of verse'. *The Strayed Reveller* is, like *The Forsaken Merman*, a fine piece of pictorial imagination, but it has not the same music. Sometimes its rhythm is quite satisfying:

Faster, faster,  
 O Circe, Goddess,  
 Let the wild, thronging train,  
 The bright procession  
 Of eddying forms,  
 Sweep through my soul;

and the form well adapted to rapid ever-changing flow of imagery; but often the pauses and line-divisions are awkward, or at least not inevitable, as the very next stanzas show.

In general, then, we are forced to conclude that, in this kind of verse, where there is no rime there must be in compensation either the unfailing charm of an unforced fluent melody like that of Shelley's *Queen Mab* (and even Shelley after two cantos had to fall back on regular blank verse, and later made further changes), or a constant command of strong and striking imaginative phrase as in Henley:

How wonderful is Death,  
 Death and his brother Sleep!  
 One pale as yonder waning moon  
 With lips of lurid blue;  
 The other, rosy as the morn  
 When throned on ocean's wave  
 It blushes o'er the world;  
 Yet both so passing wonderful!

The magic car moved on.  
 As they approached their goal  
 The coursers seemed to gather speed;  
 The sea no longer was distinguished; earth  
 Appeared a vast and shadowy sphere;  
 The sun's unclouded orb  
 Rolled through the black concave;  
 Its rays of rapid light  
 Parted around the chariot's swifter course,  
 And fell, like ocean's feathery spray  
 Dashed from the boiling surge  
 Before a vessel's prow.

Spirit of Nature! thou  
 Life of interminable multitudes;  
 Soul of those mighty spheres  
 Whose changeless paths thro' Heaven's deep silence lie;  
 Soul of that smallest being,  
 The dwelling of whose life  
 Is one faint April sun-gleam:—  
 Man, like these passive things,  
 Thy will unconsciously fulfilleth:  
 Like theirs, his age of endless peace,  
 Which time is fast maturing,  
 Will swiftly, surely come;  
 And the unbounded frame which thou pervadest  
 Will be without a flaw  
 Marring its perfect symmetry. (*Queen Mab*, i and iii.)

Space and dread and the dark—  
 Over a livid stretch of sky  
 Cloud-monsters crawling, like a funeral train

Of huge, primeval presences  
 Stooping beneath the weight  
 Of some enormous, rudimentary grief;  
 While in the haunting loneliness  
 The far sea waits and wanders with a sound  
 As of the trailing skirts of Destiny,  
 Passing unseen  
 To some immitigable end  
 With her grey henchman, Death. . . .

Life—life—let there be life!  
 Better a thousand times the roaring hours  
 When wave and wind,  
 Like the Arch-Murderer in flight  
 From the Avenger at his heel,  
 Storm through the desolate fastnesses  
 And wild, waste places of the world!

Life—give me life until the end,  
 That at the very top of being,  
 The battle-spirit shouting in my blood,  
 Out of the reddest hell of the fight  
 I may be snatched and flung  
 Into the everlasting lull,  
 The immortal, incommunicable dream.

(Henley, *Rhymes and Rhythms*, xvi.)

My final example carries the contrast between short and long lines to its furthest possible limit, but at the same time shows how even in these extremes rime may have a unifying effect:<sup>1</sup>

The brown roads run  
 Bare to the sun;  
 Not a cart  
 Jingles in through the gates that our torn graves guard  
 To the mart;  
 Never a peasant girl passes and smiles with raised eyes for a greeting,  
 Never men clink at the cottage the cup of the wayfarers' meeting;  
 (Strown  
 Into heaps by the roadside the cottages, blown  
 And riven by shell-fire, and scarred!)

Only at night when the dank mists arise and the gaze of our watchers is  
 hidden,  
 Comes tramp and muttered cursing of infantry, rush of horse ridden  
 In fear of the dark—  
 For who knows how the far shell may swerve or the blind bullet hiss to  
 its mark!

(Gilbert Frankau, *The City of Fear*.)

<sup>1</sup> It will be noticed how the integrity of the longer lines is constantly threatened by an inevitable and insistent medial break, and is hardly saved even by the rime.



## XIX

## BLANK VERSE PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE

§ 1. Heroic blank verse may be regarded as occupying an intermediate position between rimed stanzaic forms and unrimed *vers libres*; and it is partly for this reason, because it partakes both of the stability of the one and the mobility of the other, and can at its need move in either direction, towards greater fixity or greater elasticity, that, as Tennyson said, 'blank verse can be the finest mode of expression in our language'. For in the best blank verse, the ear, or auditory imagination, is satisfied without the obvious recurrences of rime and stanzaic pattern, but at the same time it is not cheated of the sense of form. There is form and structure, not predetermined as a form and fixed, but arising out of, and evolving itself in response to, the demands of the poet's creative feeling, the demands of sense and emotion. It obeys a law of unity, not one of mere uniformity. It is not moulded from without, but grows from within.

§ 2. Such a verse form as this was, of course, invaluable wherever, as in drama, the writer required a medium of poetic expression which left him free to move as his changing themes required, without being shackled by the necessity of conforming to a rigid artificial framework of sound; to change his key and vary his cadences without abandoning his metrical base. For in blank verse the primary rhythm may be every whit as strong and individual as in rimed verse; the secondary rhythm may be present in actuality without being insistently obtrusive and without imposing any restrictions upon the natural play of poetic feeling, or the natural distribution of dramatic emphasis, or the natural rise and fall of emotional pitch. There is no fixed unit of tertiary rhythm like the stanza, but instead there may be corresponding organic units, whose form and extent are dominated only by harmonic considerations arising out of the movement of the thought and passion to be expressed.

§ 3. 'Every short poem', Tennyson once said, 'should have a definite shape like a curve, sometimes a single, sometimes a double one, assumed by a severed tress or the rind of an apple



when flung on the floor'. On a smaller scale, too, a stanza should have this definite shape like a curve; for an organic plan is a necessity in all art, at all levels—for the parts as well as the whole. There must be a more or less conscious structural idea in the artist's mind, according to which his composition is designed so as to produce an organic relation between the parts themselves and between the parts and the whole. What Pater said in his essay on *Style* is far more true of verse than of prose: 'In literary as in all other art, structure is all-important, felt, or painfully missed, everywhere—that architectural conception of work, which foresees the end in the beginning and never loses sight of it, and in every part is conscious of all the rest.' This is peculiarly applicable to the building up or evolution of stanzas. But in the larger forms of art—the epic and the drama—the parts, too, are larger, and the same meticulous attention to pattern on the smaller scale is neither possible nor perhaps desirable. A wider sweep and more comprehensive effects are aimed at; more countenance and accommodation can be given to the unexpected, and there is more room for movement within the scheme; for in this case 'the literary architecture, if it is to be rich and expressive, involves not only foresight of the end in the beginning, but also development or growth of design, in the process of execution, with many irregularities, surprises, and afterthoughts; the contingent as well as the necessary being subsumed under the unity of the whole'. This, whether Pater thought of it or not, is the advantage that blank verse has over rimed forms, even the longer stanzas like the Chaucerian and Spenserian: the elasticity of its paragraphs enables the rhythm to fit closely to the movement of thought and feeling, whether simple or complex, and give it complete and satisfying expression without any of the artificiality and constraint that may come from rime and a rigid stanza form, but always admitting the guidance or control of a normal scheme of metre.

§ 4. Blank verse can be used, and well used, for almost all purposes, for tragedy and comedy, for epic narrative, and for reflective description, as was shown by Marlowe, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, and Tennyson; and it is also capable of being charged with lyric emotion, as was shown by Marlowe, by Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Richard II*, by Shelley in *Alastor* and *Prometheus Unbound*, by Tennyson in *Cenone*, *Tithonus*, and the song from *The Princess*, 'Come down, O maid,

from yonder mountain height', and by Stephen Phillips in *Mar-  
pessa*.

It responds equally to lighter and darker moods, to the calls of idealism or realism, of geniality or cynicism; it may be light and swift in movement, or slow and majestic; it lends itself to luxuriance of style or austerity, to languor or energy, to the delicate melodies of the violin or the solemn harmonies of the organ.

It was very fortunate for England that blank verse appeared just at the time when it was wanted (partly, perhaps, *because* it was wanted) to provide a vehicle for the expression by a great age—an age that was just feeling its splendid powers and opportunities—of a poetic and dramatic vision that embraced the whole range of human experience and aspiration, and touched the furthest bounds of human thought and feeling.

§ 5. The reason for this wide diversity of effect and these inexhaustible possibilities lies, of course, in its flexibility and freedom from artificial restraints and its openness to all kinds of metrical variation. Metrical variation, within the individual line, has been discussed in an earlier chapter (Ch. XI, see also Ch. XIV, §§ 4-5), but constant change of the balance of successive lines by means of shifting the pauses and the distribution of heavier and lighter speech-accents, together with the judicious use of overflow, also enables the poet to mould verse paragraphs of great diversity, both in length and in cadence. At times he may use end-stopped verse, with its more regular medial breaks, for purposes of epigrammatic or sententious effect, or terse expression of contrast or abrupt changes of idea, or definite and emphatic statement of clear-cut thought; but it remains true that its finer possibilities are those which Wordsworth evidently had in mind when he gave us his 'notion of harmonious verse, that it consisted (the English iambic blank verse above all) in the apt arrangement of pauses and cadences, and the sweep of whole paragraphs,

with many a winding bout  
Of linked sweetness long drawn out,

and not in the even flow, much less in the prominence or antithetic vigour of single lines, which were indeed injurious to the total effect, except where they were introduced for some specific purpose' (*Satyrane's Letters*, No. 3, appended to Coleridge, *Biog. Lit.*, Ch. xxii).

Thus, as J. A. Symonds says, blank verse 'seems adapted

specially for thought in evolution ; it requires progression and sustained effort. As a consequence of this its melody is determined by the sense which it contains, and depends more on proportion and harmony of sounds than upon recurrences and regularities of structure. This being its essential character, it follows that blank verse is better suited for dialogues, descriptions, eloquent appeals, rhetorical declamations, for all those forms of poetry which imply a continuity and development of thought, than for the setting forth of some one perfect and full-formed idea.<sup>1</sup>

§ 6. But the very plasticity that is capable of being its greatest virtue may also be its greatest danger. Its demands are apparently so little, but no measure taxes more severely the poetic resources and judgement and aesthetic balance of the writer, and none shows up more remorselessly any poverty of vital thought and feeling or deficiency of rhythmic energy. The moment that in weak hands the rhythm of blank verse ceases to be governed by the movement of the sense, to be an organic embodiment of the poet's creative feeling, it becomes mere mechanism or formlessness, and is little or no better than prose that has the fault (for prose) of scanning as verse.

Johnson said with some justice of Akenside that 'the concatenation of his verses is commonly too long continued, and the full close does not recur with sufficient frequency. The sense is carried on through a long intertexture of complicated clauses, and as nothing is distinguished, nothing is remembered. The exemption which blank verse affords from the necessity of closing the sense with the couplet, betrays luxuriant and active minds into such self-indulgence that they pile image upon image, ornament upon ornament, and are not easily persuaded to close the sense at all. Blank verse will therefore, I fear, be too often found in description exuberant, in argument loquacious, and in narration tiresome.' He is clearly thinking more of the bearing of metre on style than

<sup>1</sup> Johnson pointed out the suitability of blank verse for Thomson's descriptions of extended scenes and general effects: 'Thomson's wide expansion of general views and his enumeration of circumstantial varieties would have been obstructed and embarrassed by the frequent intersections of the sense, which are the necessary effects of rhyme.' Elsewhere of course he complained that variety of pauses 'changes the measures of an English poet to the periods of a declaimer', and recommended 'the preservation of every verse unmingled with another, as a distinct system of sounds', adding that this distinctness is accentuated—he says 'obtained'—and 'preserved by the artifice of rhyme'.

of its own harmonies, but Milton would have showed that free overflow, while not favouring epigram, was compatible with a strong, emphatic style such as he loved. Nevertheless, he has certainly put his finger upon what may easily become a dangerous laxity.

§ 7. J. A. Symonds has given an eloquent account of how Marlowe gave variety of emphasis and pause to the 'drumming decasyllabon', so that 'his metre did not preserve one unalterable type, but assumed diversity of cadences, the beauty of which depended on their adaptation to the current of his ideas. . . . He found no sequence of concatenated lines or attempt at periods—one verse followed another in isolation, and all were made after the same insipid model.<sup>1</sup> He grouped his lines according to the sense, allowing the thought contained in his words to dominate their form, and carrying the melody through several verses linked together by rhetorical modulations.'

Symonds may somewhat exaggerate Marlowe's actual achievement, which nevertheless was wonderful enough; but he does not exaggerate the possible compass of blank verse, and the effects of which it was capable in strong and skilful hands.

§ 8. Marlowe's paragraphs, however, seem to be achieved by the sheer onward rush of his fiery Titanic passion, while those of Milton—'mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies'—seem as though they were preconceived as organic wholes. This is the secret of Milton's grand, sustained power. His never-failing majestic forward sweep depends partly, of course, on the fullness of his imagination, but largely on his wonderful skill in varying the position of the pause and drawing out the sense variously from line to line, so as to avoid any check in the movement of the whole; and by giving always a further impetus to prevent any line having to stand by itself. There are within these harmonic periods several important pauses, major as well as minor; but they never give the impression that the structure is complete. They rather hold the harmony in suspense, giving an opportunity to take breath and collect forces, as it were, to continue the paragraph to its full and perfect close. The most remarkable example of this characteristic is that tremen-

<sup>1</sup> Similarly Swinburne speaks of 'the tuneless tramp of *Gorboduc*'. It was not quite as bad as that, at least in the part written by Sackville; but still Marlowe's is the credit of energizing it, giving it life and fire.

dous paragraph in *Paradise Lost* (I, 192-220) which describes how Satan

Prone on the Flood, extended long and large,  
Lay floating many a rood,

and contains the elaborate parenthetical simile of the Leviathan. The most marked pauses are those before and after these six interposed lines; yet even here we feel that the movement is not brought to a close, but rather suspended: the stream is momentarily dammed up, but when the picture is completed with those graphic details which so dilate the imagination, then the current, having gathered volume, bursts forth with yet greater strength and a momentum which, with an irresistible forward sweep, carries it on for twelve more lines.

§ 9. These magnificent 'slow planetary wheelings'<sup>1</sup> are not found in Shakespeare; nor, indeed, would they be in place in drama that holds the mirror up to nature, as they are when with Milton we have 'passed the flaming bounds of Place and Time'. Shakespeare, too, has his verse paragraphs, but they are not composed in the same way as Milton's. The principle of Milton's paragraphs is that of suspense, as in the Ciceronian prose period. Shakespeare's paragraph is rather like that kind of sentence which in books on rhetoric is technically called 'loose'; it is not based on the principle of subordination, nor is it a mere mechanical aggregate, but its method is that of amplification, and its effect cumulative. On analysis we may be able to see how it has been built up, but it is the result of a continuous process; the parts are not merely added, like bricks which lie side by side, or one on another, but they are closely dovetailed, or rather, to change the

<sup>1</sup> Possibly when De Quincey used this illuminating phrase, he had in mind a passage from Book V (ll. 618-27) which at once exemplifies and describes the movement of Milton's verse:

That day, as other solem dayes, they spent  
In song and dance about the sacred Hill,  
Mystical dance, which yonder starrie Spheare  
Of Planets and of fixt in all her Wheelles  
Resembles nearest, mazes intricate,  
Eccentric, intervold, yet regular  
Then most, when most irregular they seem:  
And in their motions harmonie Divine  
So smooths her charming tones, that Gods own ear  
Listens delighted.

metaphor, one grows out of another without losing its organic relation to the central idea of the whole. It is constantly putting forth new shoots; before we have realized that one aspect has been unfolded the point of view has been changed, and we find before us another aspect, for one thing that Shakespeare instinctively realizes and makes us realize is that truth is a jewel of many facets.

§ 10. This cumulative method (which Shakespeare had learnt from Marlowe, though what he found in its vigorous elemental simplicity he gave with more masterful complexity and applied with more skilfully varied dramatic effect<sup>1</sup>) was, on a more ethereal level, instinctively adopted by Shelley for the beautiful and impulsively fluent verse of *Alastor*, which bears us along, we know not—and care not—whither, on a swift stream of ever-changing imagery. One image has melted into another before we have grasped it, for Shelley's blank verse is informed with the breathless impetuosity of that eager pursuit of the ideal which is the real subject of the poem; its spirit was like his own, 'tameless, and swift, and proud', for his prayer to the West Wind was answered—

Be thou, spirit fierce,  
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Even greater intensity is given to these qualities by the spiritual fire of *Prometheus Unbound*:

Behold it, rolling on  
Under the curdling winds, and islanding  
The peak whereon we stand, midway, around,  
Encinctured by the dark and blooming forests,  
Dim twilight lawns, and stream-illuminated caves,  
And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist:  
And far on high the keen sky-cleaving mountains  
From icy spires of sun-like radiance fling

<sup>1</sup> Marlowe's principle, even in his looser paragraphs, seems usually to aim at an emotional climax, and he generally achieves a climax of sound, although he nearly always starts off with a striking line. Cf. these concluding lines of speeches or unitary parts of speeches:—'And none but thou shalt be my paramour' (*Faust*. sc. xiv), 'And then myself to fair Zenocrate' (*I. Tamb.* i. ii), 'In every part proportioned like the man | Should make the world subdued to Tamburlaine' (*ib.* II. i), 'That perfect bliss and sole felicity, | The sweet fruition of an earthly crown' (*ib.* II. vii),

'Yet should there hover in their restless heads  
One thought, one grace, one wonder, at the least,  
Which into words no virtue can digest.' (*ib.* v. i.)

This climax can be found frequently in Shakespeare, e.g. Henry IV's invocation to Sleep, and *Richard II*, II. i. 66, III. ii. 177.

The dawn, as lifted Ocean's dazzling spray,  
From some Atlantic islet scattered up,  
Spangles the wind with lamp-like water-drops.  
. . . . Hark! the rushing snow!  
The sun-awakened avalanche! whose mass,  
Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there  
Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds  
As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth  
Is loosened, and the nations echo round,  
Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.

§ II. As might be expected, Shelley's verse shows more overflow than Shakespeare's (in his middle period) and far more than Marlowe's. This is less obvious in the above-quoted passage than in the first two speeches (if they can be called 'speeches' which are so tremulous with music) of Panthea in Act II, or in such a passage in *Alastor* as that commencing

He heard  
The motion of the leaves; the grass that sprung  
Startled, and glanced and trembled, even to feel  
An unaccustomed presence; and the sound  
Of the sweet brook that from the secret springs  
Of that dark fountain rose. (ll. 474 et seq.)

or the earlier lines (ll. 239-71) describing how the Poet wandered on wildly

Through Balk, and where the desolated tombs  
Of Parthian kings scatter to every wind  
Their wasting dust . . .

This last example exhibits very clearly, not merely an unfailling and ever-changing music, but the characteristic interlinking of rhythm, with its free Miltonic use of internal stops (never giving, as in Thomson, the impression of disjointedness) and bold overflow, which enables Shelley to extend the cumulative effect over very long passages.

Just before this, however, there is a short paragraph,

As an eagle, grasped  
In folds of the green serpent, feels her breast  
Burn with the poison, and precipitates,  
Through night and day, tempest and calm and cloud,  
Frantic with dizzying anguish, her blind flight  
O'er the wide æry wilderness: thus, driven  
By the bright shadow of that lovely dream,  
Beneath the cold glare of the desolate night,  
Through tangled swamps and deep precipitous dells,  
Startling with careless step the moonlight snake,  
He fled. (ll. 227-37.)

which, despite the absence of overflow in the last four lines, is really 'periodic' and constructed on the Miltonic principle of suspense.

§ 12. Similarly Marlowe, when his imagination was fired, had the power of fusing into a unified periodic whole passages where technically almost all the lines are end-stopped, as in

If all the pens that poets ever held  
Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts,  
And every sweetness that inspired their hearts,  
Their minds, and muses on admired themes;  
If all the heavenly quintessence they still  
From their immortal flowers of poesy,  
Wherein, as in a mirror, we perceive  
The highest reaches of a human wit;  
If these had made one poem's period,  
And all combined in beauty's worthiness,  
Yet should there hover in their restless heads  
One thought, one grace, one wonder, at the least,  
Which into words no virtue can digest.

or, to take a shorter example, that wonderful crescendo of passionate intensity in *Faustus*:

Think'st thou that I who saw the face of God,  
And tasted the eternal joys of Heaven,  
Am not tormented with ten thousand hells  
In being deprived of everlasting bliss?

This, however, would be hardly possible when the verse is pitched in a lower key, and often it is only by the intense heat of Marlowe's imaginative passion that the parts are fused into an emotionally unified whole; but what Milton and Shelley did, and Shakespeare whenever he wished it, was by the very structure of the verse paragraph, by free overflow and frequently beginning or ending within the line, to make this effect irresistible.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Professor Saintsbury has done less than justice to Marlowe in this respect. The well-known purple patches of poetry in *Tamburlaine* and *Faustus* are mostly end-stopped (although the verse is 'always moving as the restless spheres', and has a swelling impetus which often overcomes the stoppage), but the more strictly dramatic *Jew of Malta* and *Edward II* show that Marlowe was rapidly learning the value of overflow, as in

O thou, that with a fiery pillar led'st  
The sons of Israel through the dismal shades,  
Light Abraham's offspring; and direct the hand  
Of Abigail this night; or let the day  
Turn to eternal darkness after this!

and the whole speech of Barabas at the beginning of Act II, Sc. i, and throughout Act V, Sc. iii (particularly the speech of Barabas 'What wilt thou give me...'),



§ 13. Milton, however, master as he was of the rich melody of 'the brooks of Eden mazily murmuring', as well as of the more massive harmonies, showed nothing like the marvellous versatility of Shakespeare's craftsmanship in blank verse—a versatility that was essential for the reflection of the rich and abundant variety of life that fills his plays. Shakespeare could fashion the continuous metrical period with interlinked cadences when he needed it; but, after all, the drama gives comparatively little genuine opportunity for this, and more often his verse is built up in shorter sections, whether end-stopped or overflowing and middle-stopped, not merely in rapid dialogue, but in speeches of some length. For one thing, a sharply defined form is naturally adapted to the expression of clear and definite ideas: for another thing, Shakespeare soon learnt how pauses that amount to real breaks, even more within the line than at the end, are useful in the expression of contrasts of character and the ironies of situation and sudden or broken thought, or for scenes of great emotional strain.

After indulging in the quotation of two purple patches which exhibit Shakespeare's metrical power at its high-water mark:

Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast  
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains  
In cradle of the rude imperious surge,  
And in the visitation of the winds,  
Who take the ruffian billows by the top,  
Curling their monstrous heads, and hanging them  
With deafening clamour in the slippery clouds,  
That with the hurly death itself awakes?  
Canst thou, O partial sleep! give thy repose  
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude,  
And in the calmest and most stillest night,  
With all appliances and means to boot,  
Deny it to a king? (2 Henry IV, III. i.)

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,  
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,  
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,  
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you  
From seasons such as these? (Lear, III. iv.)

I would give an illustration from *As You Like It* (II. i) of his workmanship on a more ordinary level:

To-day my lord of Amiens and myself  
Did steal behind him as he lay along

which contains nearly twenty examples. In *Edward II*, see II. v. 20-4, III. ii. 1-19, III. iii. 79-86 (Spencer's last long speech), IV. ii, *passim*, and the whole of IV. iv, for the more outstanding examples.

Under an oak whose antique root peeps out  
Upon the brook that brawls along this wood ;  
To the which place a poor sequester'd stag,  
That from the hunters' aim had ta'en a hurt,  
Did come to languish ; and, indeed, my lord,  
The wretched animal heav'd forth such groans  
That their discharge did stretch his leathern coat  
Almost to bursting, and the big round tears  
Cours'd one another down his innocent nose  
In piteous chase ; and thus the hairy fool,  
Much marked of the melancholy Jaques,  
Stood on the extremest verge of the swift brook,  
Augmenting it with tears.

*Duke.* But what said Jaques ?  
Did he not moralize this spectacle ?

*1st Lord.* O, yes, into a thousand similes.  
First, for his weeping into the needless stream ;  
'Poor deer,' quoth he, 'thou mak'st a testament  
As worldlings do, giving thy sum of more  
To that which had too much : ' then, being there alone,  
Left and abandon'd of his velvet friends ;  
'Tis right,' quoth he ; ' thus misery doth part  
The flux of company : ' anon, a careless herd,  
Full of the pasture, jumps along by him  
And never strays to greet him : ' Ay,' quoth Jaques,  
'Sweep on, you fat and greasy citizens ;  
'Tis just the fashion : wherefore do you look  
Upon that poor and broken bankrupt there ?'  
Thus most invectively he pierceth through  
The body of the country, city, court,  
Yea, and of this our life ; swearing that we  
Are mere usurpers, tyrants, and what's worse,  
To fright the animals and to kill them up  
In their assign'd and native dwelling-place.

I would point out, as an example of Shakespeare's varied adaptation of verse to character, the contrast between the smooth, run-on movement of Kent's speech in *Lear*, III. i. 35-9 :

If on my credit you dare build so far  
To make your speed to Dover, you shall find  
Some that will thank you, making just report  
Of how unnatural and bemadding sorrow  
The king hath cause to plain.

and the broken utterance of Lear in the storm at the beginning of the second and fourth scenes of the third Act.

The first 110 lines of *Hamlet*, I. v may be taken as a good example of Shakespeare's absolute control of his medium, and his power of moulding it to suit the demands of the situation—the contrast between the broken dialogue at the beginning and the vivid

period in which the Ghost describes his poisoning (ll. 59-70), the distracted soliloquy of Hamlet—and the constant rise of imaginative temperature which is an index to the growing horror of Hamlet. Or, to take separate scenes, there is the contrast in metrical style between the complacent and sententious ‘few precepts’ of practical philosophy uttered by Polonius—clear-cut, detached ideas, often antithetically presented—and the two soliloquies (II. ii and III. i) in which Hamlet pours out his overwrought emotions and lays bare his tortured mind in verse which is bound by no limits but the organic ones set by the feeling and thought to be expressed.

§ 14. In all these plays, even when there is free ‘running-on’ of the rhythm, the line is perpetually suggesting itself as a metrical integer: the presence of a secondary rhythm, over and above the primary rhythm, is constantly felt. But excessive enjambement, reinforced by redundant syllables and weak endings (especially when combined with much internal irregularity), tends to break down the distinction between verse and loosely rhythmical prose. The danger is illustrated by such passages as

Not for Bohemia, nor the pomp that may  
Be threath glean'd, for all the sun sees or  
The close earth wombs or the profound seas hide  
In unknown fathoms, will I break my oath  
To this my fair below'd. Therefore, I pray you,  
As you have ever been my father's honour'd friend,  
When he shall miss me (as, in faith, I mean not  
To see him any more), cast your good counsels  
Upon his passion: let myself and fortune  
Tug for the time to come.

Of these ten lines (*Winter's Tale*, IV. iv. 498-507—the remainder of the speech is in the same style) six at least must be run on, two have weak or light endings, four have feminine endings, and one is an alexandrine. Compare also *Winter's Tale*, IV. iv. 531-43, 548-51, 557-64; *Pericles*, III. ii. 27-39; III. iii. 9-17; and from Fletcher, *Maid's Tragedy*, V. i:

I must kill him,  
And I will doo't bravely: the meere joy  
Tels me, I merit in it. Yet I must not  
Thus tamely doe it as he sleepes—that were  
To rock him to another world: my vengeance  
Shall take him waking, and then lay before him  
The number of his wrongs and punishments:  
Ile shape his sins like Furies, till I waken

His evill angell, his sicke conscience,  
And then Ile strike him dead.

and from Massinger, *Fatal Dowry*, v. ii :

I but attended  
Your lordship's pleasure. For the fact as of  
The former, I confess it, but with what  
Base wrongs I was unwillingly drawn to it,  
To my few words there are some other proofs  
To witness this for truth.

Laxity may have been deliberately admitted into the drama of Shakespeare's later years with a view of securing an effect of greater ease and naturalness, but in any case a comparison of these amorphous passages with the invocation to Sleep by Henry IV (quoted in § 13), or even with Richard's

For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground  
And tell sad stories of the death of kings . . .  
(*Rich. II*, III. ii. 155-77.)

or Gaunt's speech about 'This royal throne of kings' (*ib.* II. i. 40-66), will show how rapidly a noble form may, as form, descend towards licence and anarchy as a result of ignoring the factor of secondary rhythm. Shakespeare in his tragedies had carried liberty as far as was safe, even in the interests of dramatic expression; even amidst the splendours of *Antony and Cleopatra* the beginning of metrical decadence can be seen, and, whether Shakespeare was influenced or not by Fletcher and others, this rapidly became more prominent in the latest romances and in the work of his successors.

§ 15. Tennyson was a conscious master of verse-craft, but had not, of course, the same compass as Milton nor the same wide-ranging command as Shakespeare, nor the imaginative intensity of either. Without the same dramatic necessity as in Shakespeare, his larger verse paragraphs are successions of waves more often than periods. They are full of overflow skilfully contrived, and are therefore not unconnected; but they are built up on the principle of extension. One sentence is literally *joined on* to another; it carries on the movement of sense and rhythm, but is still something added to rather than flowing out of its predecessor. Despite Tennyson's care in commencing and ending them in the middle of a line, the paragraphs produced by this co-ordinative method have an effect very different from that of the magnificent suspended periods which Milton evolves with all the parts subordinate to the

whole. The best effect is when these sectional waves gather strength as they advance, as in

And then the two  
Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the great sea fall,  
Wave after wave, each mightier than the last,  
Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the deep  
And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged  
Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame:  
And down the wave and in the flame was borne  
A naked babe and rode to Merlin's feet,  
Who stoopt and caught the babe, and cried 'The King!  
Here is an heir for Ûther!'

But this is not always accomplished, as for instance in *The Coming of Arthur*, ll. 55-62, a passage which has previously been quoted (Ch. IV, § 5) as an example of free overflow. A fair example of Tennyson's metrical style in blank verse is this from *Guinevere*:

But I was first of all the kings who drew  
The knighthood-errant of this realm and all  
The realms together under me, their Head,  
In that fair Order of my Table Round,  
A glorious company, the flower of men,  
To serve as model for the mighty world,  
And be the fair beginning of a time.  
I made them lay their hands in mine and swear  
To reverence the King, as if he were  
Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,  
To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,  
To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,  
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,  
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,  
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,  
And worship her by years of noble deeds,  
Until they won her; for indeed I knew  
Of no more subtle master under heaven  
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,  
Not only to keep down the base in man,  
But teach high thought, and amiable words,  
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,  
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.

It will be noticed that there are here and there single lines, whether end-stopped, as

A glorious company, the flower of men,  
or even run-on, as

The knighthood-errant of this realm and all  
which can be discarded without serious detriment to either meaning<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Some meaning of course is lost, but the passage still makes sense.

or movement; although doubtless by omitting one or two lines from the series beginning 'To break . . .' (as from a similar series in *The Princess*, vii. 81-97) something of the special effect of persistent reiteration would be lost. And even in verse that is freely run-on and where Tennyson approaches the periodic effect, the parts are more separable and less organic than in Milton's fine paragraphs. This is most true of his later work, which is constantly apt to be broken by a sententious style, but it can be detected even in *Ulysses* (ll. 6-17, 45-53), though hardly in the wonderful paragraph which ends the blank verse part of *Tiresias* (ll. 217-33).<sup>1</sup> We look in vain for the momentum of Milton or the splendid impetus of Shelley.

Tennyson has put blank verse to many fine uses—and hardly even Milton was a more deliberate metrical artist—but it is in the hands of poets in whose genius have been combined strength of thought and the living force of passion and soaring imagination that its highest effects have been produced.

## XX

### THE SHORTER STANZAIC FORMS

§ 1. Groups of two rimed lines—*couplets, distichs*.

(a) *Four-foot Couplets*. (i) Four-foot iambic couplets. This is one of the oldest regular forms of rimed verse in England; it owes its origin either to the old French *vers octosyllabe*, as in *Le Roman de la Rose*, or to the iambic dimeters of the Church hymns, or to both.

Ther saw I graven eek how he,  
His fader eek, and his meynee,  
With his shippes gan to saile  
Toward the contree of Itaile.

(Chaucer, *House of Fame*, 193-6.)

It was used in the long narrative poems of Gower, Barbour, and Lydgate; by Butler (*Hudibras*), Gay (*Fables*), and Swift; Scott, Byron, and Morris; and in a lyric type of verse by Milton (*L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*). In Chaucer, Lydgate, and Milton catalectic verses are very frequent, so that a trochaic lilt is often given to the verse, as in

<sup>1</sup> For an example from the intervening period see *The Princess*, v. 364-79.

Zephyr with Aurora playing  
 As he met her once a-Maying,  
 Dancing in the chequer'd shade  
 Russet lawns and fallows gray  
 Where the nibbling flocks do stray  
 Towred cities please us then

On the whole, however, the number of syllables was carefully observed, until Coleridge in his *Christabel* returned to the freer rhythm suggested by the old ballads:

'The one red leaf, the last of its clan,  
 That dances as often as dance it can,  
 Hanging so light, and hanging so high,  
 On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Scott imitated the rhythms of *Christabel* in his *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, but in his later poems, e.g. *The Lady of the Lake*, returned to the strict 'octosyllabic couplet'. Nearly all the moderns favour a preponderance of end-stopped verses and couplets, but Morris used enjambement and rime-breaking more freely than Chaucer did. Contrast the following passages:

The boat had touch'd this silver strand  
 Just as the Hunter left his stand,  
 And stood conceal'd amid the brake,  
 To view this Lady of the Lake.  
 The maiden paused as if again  
 She thought to catch the distant strain.

(Scott, *The Lady of the Lake*.)

She said: 'Come then!  
 It shames me not that of all men  
 I love him best. But have ye there  
 Somewhat these twain might reckon dear?  
 Their life is ill enow to live  
 But that withal they needs must strive  
 With griping want when I am gone.'

He answered, 'O thou goodly one,  
 Here have we many a dear-bought thing,  
 Because our master bade us bring  
 All queenly gear for thee, and deems  
 That thou, so clad as well beseems  
 That lovely body, wouldst aboard;  
 But all we have is at thy word  
 To keep or spend.' (Morris, *The Fostering of Aslaug*.)

(ii) Four-foot trochaic couplets (with frequent final catalexis) are constantly used for lyric or semi-lyric poetry, as in Keats's

Souls of Poets dead and gone,  
 What Elysium have ye known,  
 Happy field or mossy cavern,  
 Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern.

Four-foot anapaestic couplets also are common, as in Byron's

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,  
 And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;

but dactyls are comparatively rare.

(b) *Five-foot Couplets.* (i) Five-foot iambic couplets. The *heroic couplet* was first used regularly in England by Chaucer. The *vers décasyllabe* used in the Old French *chansons de geste* was characterized by assonantal sequences. The idea of riming in couplets after the manner of the *vers octosyllabe* may have presented itself to Chaucer spontaneously; but as Machault, of whose work Chaucer had read something, had written one or two poems in decasyllabic couplets about the middle of the fourteenth century it is probable that the suggestion came from him. In any case Chaucer used the form with much greater freedom, doubtless owing to his growing familiarity with the Italian *endecasillabo*.

Even more markedly than in the case of the four-foot couplet the path of modern heroic couplet has shown a tendency to divide. Enough has perhaps been said already (see Ch. IV, §§ 4-6, and Ch. XI, § 7f) on these two extreme types—

(1) couplets with free overflow and rime-breaking, as in Keats;

(2) couplets with a thoroughly distichic character, almost every couplet ending with a distinct pause, and almost every couplet-ending being also a sentence-ending. But attention must also be drawn to two divergent sub-types of distichic verse.

(a) The balanced type suitable for didactic and satiric verse, which aims at epigrammatic and pointed expression and at antithetical effects. The caesura, usually strong, occurs usually at or near the middle of the line, dividing it into two balancing parts. Overflow from one line of a couplet to the second is rare; strict enjambement and rime-breaking are practically unknown.

Awake, my St. John! leave all meaner things  
 To low ambition, and the pride of kings.

Try what the open, what the covert yield;  
 The latent tracks, the giddy heights explore  
 Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar;



Eye Nature's walks, shoot Folly as it flies,  
 And catch the Manners living as they rise;  
 Laugh where we must, be candid where we can;  
 But vindicate the ways of God to Man.

(Pope, *Essay on Man*, 1-16.)

Compare also such lines as :

Know then thyself; presume not God to scan . . .  
 Reason is here no guide, but still a guard;  
 'Tis hers to rectify, not overthrow . . .  
 The merchant's toil, the sage's indolence,  
 The monk's humility, the hero's pride.

The rocking-horse sort of motion here achieved is obviously far better suited to meditative verse than to narrative, where a forward movement is required.

( $\beta$ ) The couplet has also been used for narrative (and dramatic) purposes without losing its distichic character. The position of the internal break is varied more freely, and the strong caesura is much less frequent. Enjambement is still rare, though less rare; and overflow within the couplet far from common. But variety is also gained by means of occasional alexandrines and triplets:

She said, and passed along the gloomy space;  
 The prince pursued her steps with equal pace.  
 Ye realms, yet unrevealed to human sight!  
 Ye gods, who rule the regions of the night!  
 Ye gliding ghosts! permit me to relate  
 The mystic wonders of your silent state.  
 Obscure they went through dreary shades, that led  
 Along the waste dominions of the dead.  
 Thus wander travellers in woods by night,  
 By the moon's doubtful and malignant light,  
 When Jove in dusky clouds involves the skies,  
 And the faint crescent shoots by fits before their eyes.

(Dryden's *Aeneid*, Book VI.)

The following lines from Pope's *Rape of the Lock* obviously differ in movement and character from those quoted above from the *Essay on Man*:

This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,  
 Nourish'd two Locks, which graceful hung behind  
 In equal curls, and well conspired to deck  
 With shining ringlets her smooth iv'ry neck.

But when to mischief mortals bend their mind,  
 How soon fit instruments of ill they find!  
 Just then Clarissa drew with tempting grace  
 A two-edg'd weapon from her shining case:

He takes the gift with rev'rence, and extends  
 The little engine on his fingers' ends;  
 This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,  
 As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her head.  
 He first expands the glitt'ring Forfex wide  
 T' inclose the Lock, now joins it to divide;  
 One fatal stroke the sacred hair does sever  
 From the fair head, for ever and for ever.

As an example of the triplet as well as the alexandrine variation a few lines may be given from *Lamia*. They also show how, under the influence of Dryden, Keats was avoiding the excessive use of enjambement which marked his first violent reaction from the school of Pope :

Then, once again, the charmed God began  
 An oath, and through the serpent's ears it ran  
 Warm, tremulous, devout, psalterian.  
 Ravished she lifted her Circean head,  
 Blushed a live damask, and swift-lisping said,  
 'I was a woman, let me have once more  
 A woman's shape and charming as before.  
 I love a youth of Corinth—O the bliss!  
 Give me my woman's form, and place me where he is.  
 Stoop, Hermes, let me breathe upon thy brow  
 And thou shalt see thy sweet nymph even now.'  
 The God on half-shut feathers sank serene,  
 She breathed upon his eyes, and swift was seen  
 Of both the guarded nymph near-smiling on the green.

The following are the principal writers of the heroic couplet: Chaucer (followed by Lydgate, Blind Harry, Gavin Douglas), Spenser (*Mother Hubbard's Tale*), Marlowe, Shakespeare (e.g. *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *Richard II*, and especially *Love's Labour's Lost*), Fletcher (*Faithful Shepherdess*), Donne, B. Jonson, Waller, Sandys (translation of *Ovid*), Denham, Dryden, Addison, Keats, Shelley, Goldsmith, Cowper, Crabbe, Byron, Leigh Hunt, Pope, Johnson, Browning, Morris, and Swinburne. From Sandys and Waller to Crabbe and Byron the strict closed couplet was in vogue; Keats and Shelley and those who followed them preferred free enjambement.

(ii) Couplets of five-foot trochaics (as Tennyson's *Vision of Sin*) and anapaestics (Browning's *Saul*) are not common; dactyls are almost unknown.

(c) *Longer metres*. Six-foot iambic, i.e. alexandrine couplets. In Drayton's *Polyolbion* the generally regular fall of a caesura

after the sixth syllable makes the metre rather lumbering and monotonous, and apt to fall into two :

The brave carnation then, with sweet and sovereign power  
(So of his colour call'd, although a July flower),  
With th' other of his kind, the speckled and the pale :  
Then th' odoriferous pink, that sends forth such a gale  
Of sweetness ; yet in scents as various as in sorts.

But the constant variation in the position of the internal break in Browning's *Fine at the Fair* and his frequent enjambements make the metre very much lighter :

Frenetic to be free ! And, do you know, there beats  
Something within my breast, as sensitive ?—repeats  
The fever of the flag ! My heart makes just the same  
Passionate stretch, fires up for lawlessness, lays claim  
To share the life they lead : losels, who have and use  
The hour what way they will,—applaud them or abuse  
Society, whereof myself am at the beck,  
Whose call obey, and stoop to burden stiffest neck !

Couplets of six-foot anapaestics also show the danger of breaking into quatrains :

'And moreover,' (the sonnet goes rhyming,) 'the skirts of Saint Paul has reached,  
'Having preached us those six Lent-lectures more unctuous than ever he preached.'  
Noon strikes,—here sweeps the procession ! our Lady borne smiling and smart  
With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and seven swords stuck in her heart !  
(Browning, *Up at a Villa*.)

This danger is still more evident in couplets of seven-foot lines, whether iambic, as in Chapman's *Iliad*, or anapaestic, as in Swinburne's *Armada*. In the former case decomposition results in the ballad-stanza, whose parent was in fact the old septenary.

Eight-foot couplets are found in Swinburne's *March* (anapaestic) and Tennyson's *Locksley Hall* (trochaic), and nine-foot couplets (trochaic) in Tennyson's ode *To Virgil*.

## § 2. Groups of three lines.

(a) *Triplets* or *tercets*—all the three lines riming together, as in Tennyson's *Two Voices* and Herrick's

Whenas in silks my Julia goes,  
Then, then methinks how sweetly flows  
The liquefaction of her clothes.

For long triplets see Swinburne's *Armada* (seven-foot anapaestic).

In Crashaw's *Wishes for the Supposed Mistress* the lines vary in length :

Whoe'er she be—  
That not impossible She  
That shall command my heart and me.

(b) *Terza Rima*, imitated from Dante's *Divina Commedia*, has a progressive rime-scheme, the first and third lines of each stanza riming with the second of the previous stanza, *a b a, b c b, c d c . . .* ; it is really therefore continuous in movement by virtue of its structure. In Shelley's *Triumph of Life* the end of the stanza rarely coincides with the end of a sentence :

Swift as a spirit hastening to his task  
Of glory and of good, the Sun sprang forth  
Rejoicing in his splendour, and the mask  
Of darkness fell from the awakened Earth—  
The smokeless altars of the mountain snows  
Flamed above crimson clouds, and at the birth  
Of light, the Ocean's orison arose . . .

So, too, in Byron's *Prophecy of Dante* ; but in his *Francesca of Rimini* Byron succeeds in avoiding almost entirely this enjambement of stanzas, as Browning also does in *The Statue and the Bust* :

The land where I was born sits by the seas,  
Upon that shore to which the Po descends,  
With all his followers in search of peace.  
Love which the gentle heart soon apprehends,  
Seized him for the fair person which was ta'en  
From me, and me even yet the mode offends.

See also Morris's *Defence of Guenevere*.

(c) Another scheme is for the first and third lines to rime together without any rime in the second line, *a x a, b y b, c z c . . .*

Who in this small urn reposes,  
Celt or Roman, man or woman,  
Steel of steel, or rose of roses ?

(Victor Plarr, *Ad Cinerarium*.)

There is here, however, internal rime in each second verse.

(d) In Lamb's *Old Familiar Faces* there is no rime, but every third line ends with the same words, 'the old familiar faces'.

### § 3. Groups of four lines—*Quatrains*.

(a) *With Couplet Rime*. Occasionally the quatrain is composed of two couplets, *a a b b* ; but the thought scheme, usually indicated

by the punctuation, shows that the quatrain and not the couplet is the unit, as in Tennyson's *May Queen*, and so in Shelley's *Sensitive Plant*:

A sensitive plant in a garden grew,  
And the young winds fed it with silver dew,  
And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light  
And closed them beneath the kisses of night.

She had no companion of mortal race,  
But her tremulous breath and her flushing face  
Told, whilst the morn kissed the sleep from her eyes,  
That her dreams were less slumber than Paradise.

Sometimes, while the verses fall into main groups of four, the couplets also form a distinct subdivision:

There's not a joy the world can give like that it takes away,  
When the glow of early thought declines, in feeling's dull decay;  
'Tis not on youth's smooth cheek the blush alone, which fades so fast,  
But the tender bloom of heart is gone ere youth itself be past.

(BYRON.)

So, too, in *The Destruction of Sennacherib*, but not in the *Song of Saul*.

(b) *With Alternate Rime*. (i) The most common true quatrain is that with alternate or interlaced rimes, *a b a b*. Of the forms with lines of equal length (*isometrical*) the *heroic quatrain* has four heroic lines, i.e. five-foot iambic, riming alternately:

The Curfew tolls the knell of parting day,  
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,  
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,  
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Gray showed that this stanza was much better adapted for elegiac purposes than for narrative,<sup>1</sup> despite the energy of Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis*. Sir William Watson has used the stanza for his *Wordsworth's Grave*. The same rime-scheme is used with other metres:

In the greenest growth of the Maytime  
I rode where the woods were wet,  
Between the dawn and the daytime;  
The spring was glad that we met.

(Swinburne, *An Interlude*.)

O listen, listen, ladies gay!  
No haughty feat of arms I tell;  
Soft is the note and sad the lay  
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle. (Scott, *Rosabelle*.)

<sup>1</sup> In fact the name *elegiac quatrain* has sometimes been given to this form.

The same rime-scheme is also used in continuous verse without stanza-division, as in Swinburne's *Hesperia* (quoted Ch. XVI, § 8, ii) and in Yeats's *Wanderings of Oisín*:

The hare grows old as she plays in the sun  
And gazes around her with eyes of brightness;  
Before the swift things that she dreamed of were done  
She limps along in an aged whiteness.

(ii) Very frequently lines of different lengths are combined in the same stanza (*anisometrical stanzas*):

She found me roots of relish sweet  
And honey wild and manna dew,  
And sure in language strange she said,  
'I love thee true.' (Keats, *La Belle Dame sans Merci*.)

The poet in a golden clime was born,  
With golden stars above;  
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,  
The love of love. (Tennyson, *The Poet*.)

Lean back, and get some minutes' peace.  
Let your head lean  
Back to the shoulder with its fleece  
Of locks, Faustine. (Swinburne, *Faustine*.)

I built my soul a lordly pleasure-house,  
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.  
I said, 'O soul, make merry and carouse,  
Dear soul, for all is well.' (Tennyson, *Palace of Art*.)

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath  
Preluded those melodious bursts, that fill  
The spacious times of great Elizabeth  
With sounds that echo still.  
(Tennyson, *A Dream of Fair Women*.)

The short final lines of these stanzas, especially those that have only two feet, give a strongly individual balance to the stanza. The last rime, coming, as it were, before it is due, has a peculiar crisp resonance which has a virtue of its own, quite apart from its unmistakable marking of the end of the stanza. The most remarkable example of this effect is perhaps in the wonderful eight-line stanza of Swinburne's *Dolores*.

(c) *Intermittent Rime—Ballad Measure*. The most common of the quatrains with equal lines is that of *Ballad metre* or *Common metre*. This is a quatrain in which (i) the first and third lines are four-foot iambic and the second and fourth three-foot iambic (originally, and often in modern times, with very free substitution), and (ii) the

rime is intermittent, i. e. the second and fourth lines rime together but not the first and third, so that the scheme is  $x_4 a_3 y_4 a_3$ :

John Gilpin was a citizen  
Of credit and renown;  
A train-band captain eke was he  
Of famous London town.

Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* contains stanzas of five, six, and even nine lines, varying the normal mould. The schemes of these variant forms are  $a_4 b_3 c c_4 b_3$  (ll. 248-52) in the five-line stanzas, that is an extra line after the third, of the same length and riming with it.<sup>1</sup> The six-line stanza is formed by adding two lines at the end, three-foot and four-foot respectively, the sixth line riming with the fourth, often identically,  $x_4 a_3 y_4 a_3 z_4 a_3$  (ll. 282-7, 367-72). Rossetti's *Stratton Water* also shows free departures from the normal ballad stanza.

The ballad stanza probably resulted from the break up, at the caesura, of the old septenary or seven-foot couplet:

Ne scholde nomon don a virst · ne slakien wel to donne  
Vor mony mon behoteth wel · that hit for-yeteth sone  
The mon that wile syker beo · to habbe godes blysse  
Do wel him seolf the hwile he may · thenne haveth he hit mid iwisse.  
(*Moral Ode*, ll. 38-41.)

There is no real difference between this form and

In somer when þe shawes be sheyne,  
And leves be large and long,  
Hit is full mery in feyre foreste  
To here þe foullys song. (*Robin Hood and the Monk*.)

In the one case—the Jesus MS. of the *Moral Ode*—the division is made by means of a period-dot, in the other case by printing in separate lines.

Sometimes the long lines had medial rimes, i.e. each couplet rimed both at the caesura and at the end:

Al is mán so is tis érn · wúlde gé nu listen  
Old in híse sínnes dérn · or hé bicúmeð cristen (*Bestiary*.)

and the break up of this into short lines produced a stanza with interlaced rimes,  $a_4 b_3 a_4 b_3$ :

A slumber did my spirit seal;  
I had no human fears:  
She seemed a thing that could not feel  
The touch of earthly years. (WORDSWORTH.)

<sup>1</sup> Lines 203-7 have a different scheme,  $a a_1 b_3 c c_4$ .

Similarly the so-called 'Poulter's measure', couplets made up each of a six-foot line followed by a seven-foot line, breaks up into the 'short-metre' stanza :

Each beast can choose his fere, | according to his mind;  
And eke can shew a friendly cheer | like to their beastly kind.  
A lion saw I late | as white as any snow,  
Which seemèd well to lead the race, | his port the same did show.  
(SURREY.)

usually without internal rime.

(d) *Enclosing Rime*—*In Memoriam Stanza*. The quatrain of four-foot iambic lines with enclosing rime, *a b b a*, is now usually known as the *In Memoriam* stanza :

Calm is the morn without a sound,  
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,  
And only through the faded leaf  
The chestnut pattering to the ground :  
Calm and deep peace on this high wold,  
And on these dews that drench the furze,  
And all the silvery gossamers  
That twinkle into green and gold :  
Calm and still light on yon great plain  
That sweeps, with all its autumn bowers  
And crowded farms and lessening towers,  
To mingle with the bounding main :  
Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
These leaves that redden to the fall ;  
And in my heart, if calm at all,  
If any calm, a calm despair :  
Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,  
And waves that sway themselves in rest,  
And dead calm in that noble breast  
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

(Tennyson, *In Memoriam*.)

The fact that these stanzas do not end in a couplet favours their combination into a continuous series ; one is not cut off so sharply from the rest. This is one of the properties which gives its metrical character to the whole poem ; for the return in the fourth line to the rime of the first gives an impression of completeness without isolation (unless there is *enjambement*), which makes the form as suitable for meditative poetry as it would be unsuitable for narrative, which requires a forward movement and greater rapidity. No stanza could be better adapted to the peculiar mood of calm and sober reflectiveness than this equal-lined scheme, where any



tendency to an impulsive increase of speed is checked by the third line lingering on the same rime as the second, followed by the turning back in the fourth which completes the circle.

Rossetti's poem in this stanza, *My Sister's Sleep*, was published before *In Memoriam*, but after 1834, by which time Tennyson had written two short poems, 'You ask me why' and 'Love thou thy land', in the same measure.<sup>1</sup>

(e) *Asymmetrical Schemes*. (i) FitzGerald for his paraphrase of the Rubā'iyāt of Omar Khayyām used a quatrain of five-foot iambic lines, of which the first, second, and fourth lines rimed together, *a a x a*.

Lo! some we loved, the loveliest and the best  
That Time and Fate of all their Vintage Prest,  
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,  
And one by one crept silently to Rest.

First there is a couplet, and then the effect of the blank third line is as if it were feeling out into the great void for a mate in its loneliness, when the fourth line, returning to the rime of the first two, gives a very conclusive unity to the quatrain. Nothing could have been better suited to express the temper of old Khayyām, 'who after vainly endeavouring to unshackle his Steps from Destiny, and to catch some authentic Glimpse of To-Morrow, fell back upon To-Day (which has outlasted so many To-Morrows!) as the only Ground he had got to stand upon, however momentarily slipping from under his Feet'.<sup>1</sup> It is in particular the isolation of the blank line that makes the metre so appropriate to that mood of calm hopelessness and aloofness that characterizes the whole series. The original Rubā'iyāt or Tetrastichs, says FitzGerald, 'are independent stanzas, consisting each of four lines of equal, though varied, prosody, sometimes *all* rhyming, but oftener the third line suspending the Cadence by which the last atones with the former two. Something as in the Greek Alcaic, where the third line seems to lift and suspend the wave that falls over in the last.'<sup>2</sup>

In *The Daisy* Tennyson varies the movement by regularly giving a feminine ending to the blank third line in each stanza. Swin-

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson did not consciously borrow this form (see *Memoir*, Ch. xiv), but it had been used by Ben Jonson and Lord Herbert of Cherbury. Shakespeare's (?) *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, which, however, was in trochaic measure, has the same rime-scheme, as has a song by Sidney, who makes a regular use of feminine rimes. The rime-scheme may have been suggested by the five-foot quatrains of the regular Italian form of the sonnet.

<sup>2</sup> Introduction to the First Edition, 1859.

burne's *Laus Veneris* is written in the same stanza as FitzGerald's; but the stanzas are linked together in pairs by community of rime between the third lines of every two consecutive stanzas; *a a p a*, *b b p b*; *c c q c*, *d d q d*.

Ah God, that love were as a flower or flame,  
That life were as the naming of a name, :/  
That death were not more pitiful than desire,  
That these things were not one thing and the same!  
Behold now, surely somewhere there is death :  
For each man hath some space of years, he saith,  
A little space of time ere time expire, .  
A little day, a little way of breath.

Another interlinked scheme is that of Swinburne's *Memorial Verses* on Gautier—*a a b a*, *b b c b* . . . *x x b x*, *b b y b*, *y y b y*, the blank line of one quatrain giving the rime for the next, and the blank lines of the first and last quatrains riming together and with the body of the penultimate.

(ii) In Campbell's *Hohenlinden* the first three lines rime together, *a a a b*, while the final lines of each stanza have for their final ictus a syllable with only light or secondary stress, *réveľrý*, *aríúllerý*, *chívalrý*, *sépulchrè*, and may therefore be taken as riming together :

On Linden, when the sun was low,  
All bloodless lay the untrodden snow,  
And dark as winter was the flow  
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.  
  
But Linden saw another sight,  
When the drum beat at dead of night  
Commanding fires of death to light  
The darkness of her scenery.

(f) *Monorimed Quatrains*. There are also a few examples of quatrains in which all four lines rime together; see Sir William Watson's *Epigrams*. The Rubā'ī, which was the Persian equivalent for the classical epigram, had sometimes four lines (hemistichs in Persian) riming together.

§ 4. With groups of five lines the permutations and combinations become almost innumerable. The following are amongst the most successful. They are mostly written in lines of unequal length.

(i) *a a a a b*.

Woe to the clansman who shall view  
This symbol of sepulchral yew,

Forgetful that its branches grew  
Where weep the heavens their holiest dew  
On Alpine's dwelling low.

(Scott, *Lady of the Lake*, III. ix.)

Here the tail-lines (the three-foot lines ending the stanzas) all rime together.

(ii) *a a b b b* and *a a a b b*.

When passion's trance is overpast,  
If tenderness and youth could last,  
Or live, whilst all wild feelings keep  
Some mortal slumber, dark and deep,  
I should not weep, I should not weep!  
It were enough to feel, to see,  
Thy soft eyes gazing tenderly,  
And dream the rest—and burn and be  
The secret food of fires unseen,  
Couldst thou but be as thou hast been. (SHELLEY.)

Rossetti's *Rose Mary* is also written in the *a a b b b* stanza.

(iii) *a a b a b*.

Out of the day and night  
A joy has taken flight;  
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,  
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight  
No more—Oh, never more! (SHELLEY.)

(iv) *a b a b b*.

Higher still and higher  
From the earth thou springest  
Like a cloud of fire;  
The blue deep thou wingest,  
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.  
(SHELLEY.)

The remarkable individuality of the stanza form of Shelley's *To a Skylark* is largely to be explained by the fifth line, which is double the length of its predecessors, and has a rising rhythm, which is in contrast with the trochaic cadence of the others, and gives a wonderfully sustained soaring effect to the verse. This is intended to be one long line and not two short, for there is in the middle no rime with the first and third lines, and, in fact, if there is any break at all in the fifth line it is often not in the middle. There is much truth in Leigh Hunt's remark that 'the earnest hurry of the four short lines, followed by the long effusiveness of the alexandrine, expresses the eagerness and continuity of the lark'.

(v) For the arrangement *a b a b a* see Browning's *By the Fireside*.

## § 5. Groups of six lines.

- (i)
- a b a b a b*
- . (α) with unequal lines:
- $a_4 b_3 a_4 b_3 a_4 b_3$
- .

Thy days are done, thy fame begun;  
 Thy country's strains record  
 The triumphs of her chosen Son,  
 The slaughters of his sword.  
 The deeds he did, the fields he won,  
 The freedom he restored. (BYRON.)

- (β) with lines of equal length:
- a b a b a b*
- .

She walks in beauty, like the night  
 Of cloudless climes and starry skies;  
 And all that's best of dark and bright  
 Meet in her aspect and her eyes;  
 Thus mellowed to that tender light  
 Which heaven to gaudy day denies. (BYRON.)

- (ii)
- x a y a z a*
- .

The blessed damozel leaned out  
 From the gold bar of Heaven;  
 Her eyes were deeper than the depth  
 Of waters stilled at even;  
 She had three lilies in her hand,  
 And the stars in her hair were seven.  
 (Rossetti, *The Blessed Damozel*.)

- (iii)
- a a b b c c*
- .

O, young Lochinvar is come out of the west,  
 Through all the wide Border his steed was the best;  
 And save his good broadsword he weapons had none,  
 He rode all unarm'd, and he rode all alone.  
 So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,  
 There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

(Scott, *Marmion*.)

See also *Allan-a-Dale* from *Rokeby*, Byron's *Maid of Athens*, and Browning's *How they Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix*. In Browning's *Marching Along* the final couplet forms a refrain, and in W. B. Yeats's *Mystical Prayer to the Masters of the Elements* lines of different lengths (alternately six-foot and three-foot) are used.

- (iv)
- a b a b c c*
- . A very common form of six-line stanza consists of an alternately rimed quatrain followed by a couplet:

Queen and Huntress, chaste and fair,  
 Now the sun is laid to sleep,  
 Seated in thy silver chair  
 State in wonted manner keep:  
 Hesperus entreats thy light,  
 Goddess excellently bright. (BEN JONSON.)

I pant for the music which is divine,  
 My heart in its thirst is a dying flower;  
 Pour forth the sound like enchanted wine,  
 Loosen the notes in a silver shower;  
 Like a herbless plain, for the gentle rain,  
 I gasp, I faint, till they wake again. (Shelley, *Music*.)

See also the *Song of Proserpine*, the Dirge commencing 'Orphan Hours, the Year is dead'. In Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, and Shelley's *Hymn of Apollo*, five-foot verses are used.

(v)  $a_1 a_2 b_3 c c_4 b_5$ . The scheme of the old *rime couée* has been revived by Suckling in *A Wedding*:

Her feet beneath her petticoat,  
 Like little mice, stole in and out  
 As if they fear'd the light:  
 But oh! she dances such a way;  
 No sun upon an Easter Day  
 Is half so fine a sight.

by Gray in his Ode *On the Death of a Favourite Cat*, by Wordsworth in *The Education of Nature* ('Three years she grew in sun and flower') and *Ruth: or the Influences of Nature*, and by many others.

(vi)  $a b b a c c$ . Rossetti's *Dante at Verona* is in four-foot lines arranged as a quatrain with enclosing rime followed by a couplet.

(vii)  $a a a b a b$ . Another scheme, which may be regarded as a variation of the tail-rime stanza, was much used by Burns and other Scots poets:

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,  
 An' let poor damnèd bodies be;  
 I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,  
     Ev'n to a deil,  
 To skelp an' scand poor dogs like me,  
     An' hear us squeel!

(*Address to the Deil*.)

See also *Holy Willie's Prayer*, *To a Mouse*, *To a Mountain Daisy*. Scott used the scheme for a song in *Rokeby*, but it has been put to finer uses as an elegiac measure in Wordsworth's *At the Grave of Burns*, and Sir William Watson's *The Tomb of Burns*.

*Note*.—For compendious stanzaic formulae the number of feet in the various lines may be indicated by attaching digits to the letters of the rime formulae. Thus the Burns stanza would be  $a_1 a_1 a_1 b_2 a_4 b_2$  (or  $a a a_1 b_2 a_4 b_2$ ), the tail-rime stanza  $a_1 a_1 b_2 c_4 c_4 b_2$ , the ballad-stanza  $x_1 a_3 y_3 a_3$ , the heroic quatrain  $a_6 b_6 a_6 b_6$  or merely  $a b a b_6$ .

## XXI

## THE LONGER STANZAS

## § I. Groups of seven lines.

(a) *The Chaucerian stanza* or *rime-royal*, *a b a b b c c*, Chaucer wrote much of his work—*Troilus and Criseyde*, *The Parlement of Foules*, *Prioress's Tale*, *Clerk's Tale*, *Man of Law's Tale*, *Second Nun's Tale*—in a stanza which is often called by his name. It is a stanza of five-foot iambic lines of which the first and third rime together; the second, fourth and fifth; the sixth and seventh forming a final couplet:

'This is ynogh, Grisilde myn,' quod he,  
 'Be now namoore agast, ne yvele afrayed;  
 I have thy feith and thy benygnytee,  
 As wel as ever womman was, assayed,  
 In greet estaat and pourelliche arrayed.  
 Now know I, goode wyf, thy stedfastnesse;  
 And hire in armes took and gan hire kesse.

(*Clerk's Tale*, ll. 1051-7.)

Ten Brink (§ 347) unwisely says 'the stanza is clearly tripartite, the first two parts of it (*pedes*) being equal to each other but unequal to the third, the *cauda*'. But the next stanza is obviously as much of bipartite structure as of tripartite:

And she for wonder took of it no keepe,  
 She herde nat what thyng he to her seyde,  
 She ferde as she had sterte out of a sleepe,  
 Til she out of hire mazednesse abreyde.  
 'Grisilde,' quod he, 'by God that for us deyde,  
 Thou art my wyf, ne noon oother I have,  
 Ne never hadde, as God my soule save!'

(*ib.* 1058-64.)

There are numerous stanzas in which the second line overflows into the third:

- |   |  |                       |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| 1 | In al this meene—while she ne stente       |                       |
| 2 | This mayde and eek hir brother to commende |                       |
| 3 | With al hir herte . . .                    | ( <i>ib.</i> 1023-5.) |
| 2 | that oother feithfully                     |                       |
| 3 | Shal be myn heir . . .                     | ( <i>ib.</i> 1066-7.) |
| 2 | I warn hem wel that I have doon this deede |                       |
| 3 | For no malice . . .                        | ( <i>ib.</i> 1073-4.) |

Cf. also ll. 1080-1, 1094-5, 1122-3, 1150-1, and the three following stanzas. Obviously therefore Chaucer set little store by any tripartite division.

Nor apparently did he feel himself bound to observe a bipartite division :

- 3 And to the peples eres, alle and some,  
 4 Was kouth eek that a newe markysesse  
 5 He with him broghte . . . (ib. 941-3.)  
 3 And peyned hire to doon al that she myghte,  
 4 Preyng the chamberes for Goddes sake  
 5 To hasten hem . . . (ib. 976-8.)  
 4 But ay they wondren what she myghte bee  
 5 That in so poure array was for to see. (ib. 1019-20.)

Again, he did not regard the final couplet rime as marking any logical division :

- 5 Hir brother eek so fair was of visage  
 6 That hem to seen the peple hath caught plesauce. (ib. 992-3.)  
 5 But with glad cheere to the gate is went  
 6 With oother folk to greet the markysesse. (ib. 1013-14.)  
 5 But atte laste whan that this lordes wende  
 6 To sitten doun to mete . . . (ib. 1027-8.)

Cf. also ll. 1097-8, 1104-5, 1111-12, 1118-19. Sometimes, however, the couplet is most distinctly separated as in ll. 1056-7 (quoted above) and 1070-1; though hardly so often as the concluding three lines. In the following stanza there is no separate concluding couplet, and no division after the fourth line, much less any possibility of tripartite division :

- O thyng biseke I yow, and warne also,  
 That ye ne prikke with no tormentynge  
 This tendre mayden, as ye han doon mo;  
 For she is fostred in hire norissynge  
 Moore tendrely, and, to my supposynge,  
 She koude nat adversitee endure  
 As koude a poure fostred creature. (ib. 1037-43.)

Clearly, therefore, Chaucer, if he divided the stanza at all, did so at whatever point suited him best, and sometimes within a line instead of at the end; and there is no sufficient evidence that he regarded as essential any subdivision of the stanza.

In fact the great virtue of the rime-royal in the hands of its master is its unifying effect. The fourth line by virtue of its rime belongs as it were to both parts and binds them together :

a b a | b  
           | b | b c c.

The pulling up with a jerk which the isolated final couplet gives to the *ottava rima* is avoided in Chaucer's rime-royal by the couplet formation of the fourth and fifth lines; and this middle couplet insinuates itself without abruptness because its riming sound already appears in the alternating scheme with which the stanza opens.

The origin of this stanza must be sought in Old French and Provençal lyric poetry, where, however, only two rimes were generally used, and there were various arrangements for the last three lines. The most common scheme was to have a final couplet riming with the first line, *ababbaa*. Chaucer wisely kept to one form and used always a third rime for his final couplet. The superiority of the scheme *ababbcc* over *ababbaa* for narrative is evident, in so far as a forward movement is given by the new rime and the stanza never turns back upon itself, as it might fitly do in a lyric.

Although Machault and others may have used the same scheme, the systematic way in which Chaucer used a definitely chosen form for both lyric and continuous narrative, and the skill and resource with which he used it, particularly as regards his constant variation of the pause, certainly justifies us in calling it the Chaucerian stanza. In *Troilus and Criseyde* Chaucer showed that the stanza was well adapted to a narrative that was in many respects like a novel and was devoted largely to psychological analysis of character and situation, so that we can see the full significance of every little incident, and the gradual stages in the drawing closer of the net are traced out with unfailing wealth of detail. Nothing of the effect is lost by hurry, and the result is a unique impression of completeness of execution.

The stanza was extremely popular amongst Chaucer's followers in England and Scotland, and its use by King James I of Scotland for his *Kingis Quair* is said to have originated the name of *rime-royal*. Guest's explanation is that the name is derived from the French *chant-royal*, a religious poem of a modified *ballade* form recited in contests for the honour of 'poet-king'. It was used also by Sackville in his contributions to the *Mirror for Magistrates*, by Shakespeare in *The Rape of Lucrece*, and by Morris in parts of *The Earthly Paradise*, e.g. *The Hill of Venus*, where there is an even greater variety than Chaucer's in the position of such pauses as there are, and a much freer use of overflow.

(b) *Other Schemes of Seven Lines.* Other stanzas with seven



equal lines are used in Wordsworth's *Affliction of Margaret* ( $a b a b c c c_4$ ) and Thomson's *City of Dreadful Night* ( $a b a b c c b_5$ ).

Stanzas with seven unequal lines are used with fine effect for lyrics, e.g.

$a_1 b_2 a_4 b_4 c_4 c_4 b_2$

Swiftly walk over the western wave,  
Spirit of Night!

Out of the misty eastern cave,  
Where, all the long and lone daylight,  
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,  
Which make thee terrible and dear,—

Swift be thy flight! (Shelley, *To Night*.)

$a_3 b_2 a_3 b_2 c_3 c_3 c_2$  Shelley's *Mutability* ('The flower that smiles to-day . . .', quoted in Ch. XVII, § 3).

Another interesting form is that of Rossetti's *The Sea Limits*, viz.  $a b b a c c a_4$ , which looks like a compressed combination of two of the *In Memoriam* stanzas that he used in *My Sister's Sleep*. See also Swinburne's *Epicede*.

## § 2. Groups of eight lines.

(a) *Ottava rima*,  $a b a b a b c c_5$ . A stanza with six heroic lines riming alternately, followed by a closing couplet on a new rime, was introduced by Wyatt. The *ottava rima* (normally in hendecasyllabic lines) was used by numerous Italian writers for romantic poems with a narrative basis, and proved to be capable of brilliant mock-heroic effects (e.g. in the hands of Ariosto, Pulci, Berni, Forteguerri, and others). It was used sporadically by some Elizabethans; e.g. by Drayton in his *The Barons' Wars*, but mainly by translators such as Harington and Fairfax. It was revived in the nineteenth century by various translators, e.g. W. S. Rose, by Tennant (*Anster Fair*) and J. H. Frere (*The Monks and the Giants*, purporting to be by two brothers Whistlecraft); but its principal use in the mock-heroic style was by Byron (who learnt partly from 'Whistlecraft', and partly from the Italians) in his *Beppo*, *Vision of Judgment*, and above all in his masterly burlesque epic, *Don Juan*. It was also used for purely romantic poetry by Shelley (*Witch of Atlas*) and Keats (*Isabella*).

And therefore Juan now began to rally

His spirits, and without more explanation

To jest upon such themes in many a sally.

Her Grace, too, also seized the same occasion,

With various similar remarks to tally,  
 But wished for a still more detail'd narration  
 Of this same mystic friar's curious doings,  
 About the present family's deaths and wooings.

(*Don Juan*, xvi. liii.)

You, Gentlemen! by dint of long seclusion  
 From better company, have kept your own  
 At Keswick, and, through still continued fusion  
 Of one another's minds, at last have grown  
 To deem as a most logical conclusion,  
 That Poesy has wreaths for you alone:  
 There is a narrowness in such a notion,  
 Which makes me wish you'd change your lakes for ocean.

(*Don Juan*, I-Dedication.)

Whate'er his youth had suffer'd, his old age  
 With wealth and talking made him some amends;  
 Though Laura sometimes put him in a rage,  
 I've heard the count and he were always friends.  
 My pen is at the bottom of a page,  
 Which being finished here the story ends;  
 'Tis to be wish'd it had been sooner done,  
 But stories somehow lengthen when begun.

(*Beppo*, xcix.)

Beattie remarked that for *The Minstrel* he had chosen the Spenserian stanza: 'I propose to give full scope to my inclination, and be either droll or pathetic, descriptive or sentimental, tender or satirical, as the humour strikes me; for, if I mistake not, the measure . . . admits equally of all these kinds of composition.' He certainly did mistake in exaggerating the adaptability of the Spenserian stanza. But Byron showed triumphantly in *Don Juan* that the *ottava rima*, with its two different movements, gives far greater scope for this wide variety of effect, and especially to the droll and satirical, to vivacious cynicism and flippancy. In particular he made full use of the opportunity for epigrammatic snap and calculated anticlimax, and for sudden changes of tone, provided by an abrupt final couplet after the six lines in alternate rime.

Keats in *Isabella* showed that it was not incapable of expressing tenderness and pathos (as did Byron, too, occasionally); but it can hardly be denied that he handicapped himself by his choice, for a romantic tale, of a stanza with a naturally abrupt and jerky ending, which seems to invite sudden transitions of mood, and that he would have done better in some other form, such as the seven-lined Chaucerian stanza of the *Clerk's Tale* and the *Man of Law's Tale*.<sup>1</sup> Shelley too gives it an ethereal lightness and dreamy fluency as natural to the airy fantasy of *The Witch of Atlas* as it is unlike anything in Byron:

<sup>1</sup> Professor Saintsbury, I find, has suggested this before me.

And ever as she went, the Image lay  
 With folded wings and unawakened eyes;  
 And o'er its gentle countenance did play  
 The busy dreams, as thick as summer flies,  
 Chasing the rapid smiles that would not stay,  
 And drinking the warm tears, and the sweet sighs  
 Inhaling, which, with busy murmur vain,  
 They had aroused from that full heart and brain.  
(Witch of Atlas, xl.)

But this *tour de force* could hardly be achieved by any poet with less than Shelley's unsurpassed gift of flowing melody. And it remains true that the *ottava rima* is a form pre-eminently suited to mock-heroic effects.

(b) *Other eight-line schemes.* The remaining types of eight-line stanza are principally to be found in lyrical poetry.

(i) *Narrative.* Chaucer, however, in his *Monk's Tale* uses a stanza of eight heroic lines with interlaced rime. It consists of two quatrains riming alternately, the second rime of the first quatrain being continued as the first rime of the second; i.e. the first and third lines rime together; the second, fourth, fifth, and seventh; and the sixth and eighth, *ababbcbc*. This is of no great importance save as being perhaps the basis of the Spenserian stanza.

I wol biwaille, in manere of tragédie,  
 The harm of hem that stode in heigh degree,  
 And fillen so that ther nas no remédie  
 To brynge hem out of hir adversitee;  
 For certein, whan that Fortune list to flee,  
 Ther may no man the cours of hire with-holde.  
 Lat no man truste on blynd prosperitee;  
 Be war by thise ensamples trewe and olde.

The same rime-scheme with three-foot lines (mainly anapaestic) was used by Byron in some *Stanzas for Music* commencing 'Bright be the place of thy soul'.

(ii) *Lyrical.* (a) Not uncommon is a stanza composed of two quatrains with alternate rime, not bound together by any common rime, *abab cdcd*. The bipartite character of the stanza is very marked in nearly all examples. Scott's *Coronach* has equal lines:

He is gone on the mountain,  
 He is lost to the forest,  
 Like a summer dried fountain  
 When our need was the sorest.

The font reappearing  
 From the raindrops shall borrow,  
 But to us comes no cheering,  
 To Duncan no morrow.

More numerous are forms with lines of unequal lengths :

One word is too often profaned  
 For me to profane it,  
 One feeling too falsely disdained  
 For thee to disdain it.  
 One hope is too like despair  
 For prudence to smother,  
 And pity from thee more dear  
 Than that from another. (SHELLEY.)

Compare also Shelley's *Love's Philosophy* ('The fountains mingle with the river',  $a_4 b_3 a_4 b_3 c_4 d_3 c_4 d_3$ ), and 'When the lamp is shattered'. In Byron's *Stanzas to Augusta*, commencing :

Though the day of my destiny's over,  
 And the star of my fate hath declined,  
 Thy soft heart refused to discover  
 The faults which so many could find.  
 Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted,  
 It shrunk not to share it with me,  
 And the love which my spirit hath painted  
 It never hath found but in *thee*.

the first, third, fifth, and seventh lines of each stanza are hypermetrical and have a feminine rime. But more effective still is the stanza of Swinburne's *Dolores* and the *Dedication to Poems and Ballads*, first series, which has the same rime-scheme and almost the same metrical scheme :

We shall know what the darkness discovers,  
 If the grave-pit be shallow or deep ;  
 And our fathers of old, and our lovers,  
 We shall know if they sleep not or sleep.  
 We shall see whether hell be not heaven,  
 Find out whether tares be not grain,  
 And the joys of thee seventy times seven,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

The peculiar and magnificent individuality of this stanza-form is to be explained partly by the ringing alternation of masculine and feminine rimes (in which Byron had anticipated Swinburne), but even more by the shortened last line with its sudden reduction of tempo and its marvellous clear vibrancy. This wonderful line is the melodic keystone, as it were, of a wonderful stanzaic arch.

This stanza is, strictly speaking, only anisometrical in the last line, which has two feet, instead of the usual three anapaests ; but, as in

Byron's stanza, the first, third, fifth, and seventh lines are hypermetrical.

(β) Cunningham's 'A wet sheet and a flowing sea' is written in alternate four-foot and three-foot lines riming intermittently,  $p_4 a_3$ ,  $q_4 a_3 r_4 b_3 s_4 b_3$ ; but the first and second quatrains are bound together—more closely than is usual in these bipartite stanzas—by the fourth line being repeated in the fifth.

A wet sheet and a flowing sea,  
A wind that follows fast  
And fills the white and rustling sail  
And bends the gallant mast;  
And bends the gallant mast, my boys,  
While like the eagle free  
Away the good ship flies, and leaves  
Old England on the lee.

(γ)  $a b a b c c d d$ —an alternately rimed quatrain followed by double couplets.

(1) with alternate four-foot and three-foot lines, all but the second and fourth being hypermetrical and double-rimed:

There be none of Beauty's daughters  
With a magic like thee;  
And like music on the waters  
Is thy sweet voice to me:  
When, as if its sound were causing  
The charmed ocean's pausing,  
The waves lie still and gleaming,  
And the lull'd winds seem dreaming. (BYRON.)

The same rime-scheme in a stanza of four-foot iambic lines with a final alexandrine ( $a b a b c c d_4 d_6$ ) was used by Wordsworth in his *Ode to Duty*:

Stern daughter of the Voice of God!  
O Duty! if that name thou love  
Who art a light to guide, a rod  
To check the erring, and reprove;  
Thou who art victory and law  
When empty terrors overawe;  
From vain temptations dost set free,  
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity.

Here again it is the solemn close in this lengthened last line that gives its special dignity to this stanza.

(2) Another very successful variant of this scheme was evolved by Wordsworth. In *The Reaper* he made the rimes of the opening quatrain intermittent and shortened the fourth line,  $x a y_4 a_3 b b c c_4$  ( $a b a_4 b_3 c c d d_4$  in two stanzas, as below):

Will no one tell me what she sings?  
 Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow  
 For old, unhappy, far-off things,  
 And battles long ago :  
 Or is it some more humble lay,  
 Familiar matter of to-day?  
 Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,  
 That has been, and may be again.

(δ) Another fine stanza is used by Swinburne in his *Garden of Proserpine*, *a b a b c c c b<sub>3</sub>*, the *a* and *c* rimes being always feminine :

I am tired of tears and laughter,  
 And men that laugh and weep;  
 Of what may come hereafter  
 For men that sow to reap;  
 I am weary of days and hours,  
 Blown buds of barren flowers,  
 Desires and dreams and powers  
 And everything but sleep.

(ε) A stanza frequently used with less fine effect is an expansion of the tail-rime system, *a a a b c c c b*, as in Wordsworth's *To the Daisy*.

See also Calverley's *Ode to Tobacco* (quoted above, Ch. XVI, § 12, v), and Shelley's *Remembrance* ('Swifter far than summer's flight').

(η) An effective extension of a tail-rime stanza is exhibited in Swinburne's poem *To Victor Hugo*. Six lines in the *rime couée* scheme, with five-foot tails to three-foot body-lines, are followed by a couplet of unequal lines (four-foot and five-foot), *aa<sub>3</sub> b<sub>5</sub> cc<sub>3</sub> b<sub>5</sub> d<sub>4</sub> d<sub>5</sub>* :

In the fair days when God  
 By man as godlike trod,  
 And each alike was Greek, alike was free,  
 God's lightning spared, they said,  
 Alone the happier head  
 Whose laurels screened it; fruitless grace for thee  
 To whom the high gods gave of right  
 Their thunders and their laurels and their light.

Milton's hymn *On the morning of Christ's Nativity* has a similar stanza, but with six feet in the eighth line.

### § 3. Groups of nine lines.

(a) *Spenserian Stanza*. Spenser, said Campbell, 'brought to the subject of "The Fairy Queen" a new and enlarged structure of stanza, elaborate and intricate, but well contrived for sustaining the attention of the ear, and concluding with a majestic cadence'. This stanza, introduced and perfected by Spenser, and so rightly called by his name, is by far the most important of the nine-line, and

indeed of all stanzaic forms. It consists of the *Monk's Tale* stanza<sup>1</sup>—two heroic quatrains bound together by an interlaced rime—with a final alexandrine added, riming with the eighth line. As in the rime-royal the community of rime between the fourth and fifth lines prevents the stanza from falling definitely into two parts. Spenser was careful not to make a common practice of bipartition at the end of the fourth line; and in fact, if there is bipartition at all it occurs almost as frequently at the end of the fifth line; but he showed great skill in varying both the number and the position of the heavy pauses in the stanza. And the new stanza is not liable to that frequent effect of the final couplet in *ottava rima* which Lowell called 'putting on the brakes with a jar'.

Lowell made the mistake of thinking that the Spenserian stanza was derived from the *ottava rima*, but what he says is almost equally true when the necessary change is made. 'This delicious abundance and overrunning luxury of Spenser appear in the very structure of his verse. . . . He found [the eight-line stanza] not roomy enough, so first ran it over into another line, and then ran that added line over into an alexandrine, in which the melody of one stanza seems for ever longing and feeling forward after that which is to follow.'

The addition of this alexandrine not only prevents the extreme monotony which would result from a long succession of symmetrical stanzas, but it completely changes the balance of the stanza, gives it a distinctively individual character, and makes it capable of producing a fuller and more complex harmony.

By giving a decisive ending to one stanza in the series, Spenser was at the same time providing a firm starting-off point for the next. We feel that he is starting again, not merely because he has filled up a certain number of lines, and has therefore to pass on to the next compartment, but because that stanza has fulfilled its organic promise and come to its self-appointed end, and we wait expectantly for its successor. Each stanza is a living thing, and has the individuality of life.

There is little need to enlarge on the pre-established fitness of this complex stanza for the gorgeous pictorial effects which were such characteristic products of Spenser's rich imagination. And Mr. Mackail has pointed out how 'the long swaying rhythms of the new stanza were exactly suited to a style like Spenser's, loaded with ornament, and almost stationary in movement. It allowed

<sup>1</sup> Spenser had played with this stanza in his *Shepherd's Calender*—April and November.

him full amplitude; it held, it even invited and reinforced, the quality of boundlessness in his genius, the immense superflux of language and fancy. . . . For poetry which consists of a stream of pageants it is exactly suited. It is no less apt as a vehicle of imaginative reflection, for thought translating itself in images. It lends itself to rich effects produced by accumulated touches' (*Springs of Helicon*, pp. 121-3).

On the other hand, it has defects or at least dangers.

i. Joseph Warton averred that its constraint led the poet into 'many absurdities'. One of these was that it 'obliged him to dilate the thing to be expressed, however unimportant, with trifling and tedious circumlocutions'. It certainly allows and even tempts him to do so; but this invitation to diffuseness of expression and over-elaboration of material is only a danger where there is poverty of thought and imagination, and Spenser, Keats, and Shelley (in *Adonais* at least) were usually poets enough to 'load every rift with ore'. Not always however, for even in Spenser, as Mr. Mackail admits, 'it often drags and becomes languid. The last line sometimes seems pure surplusage; sometimes one may say the same of more than the last line. The thought, and even the imagery, become exhausted before the end of the stanza is reached. Spenser's fluency is unfailing; but there are many places where the fluency becomes mere verbosity, many where the stanza seems stuffed out with anything that comes first to hand' (*op. cit.*, p. 124).

ii. Again, it has not the capacity for speed and directness of movement that is essential to the verse of narrative poetry. 'Its movement is not progressive', says Mr. Mackail; 'it is like that of spreading and interlacing circles.' This is principally due to the number and complicated arrangement of the rimes. Shelley overcame the tendency to a considerable degree by the persistent use of overflow, and many of the individual stanzas of *The Revolt of Islam* have a marvellous swiftness and lightness of movement which has not been equalled by any other poet.<sup>1</sup>

iii. Warton also thought the Spenserian scheme led the poet into imperfect rimes as well as redundancy, for the English language 'does not easily fall into a frequent repetition of the same termination'. Scott too agreed with the critics of *Don Roderick* 'as to

<sup>1</sup> So far as individual lines are concerned rather than stanzas as a whole, the free, though not excessive, use of trisyllabic feet, the avoidance of consonantal blockage, and of heavy syllables in thesis, also help in the production of this effect.



the lumbering weight of the stanza', and shrewdly suspected that 'it would require a very great poet indeed to prevent the tedium arising from the recurrence of rhymes. Our language is unable to support the expenditure of so many for each stanza; even Spenser himself, with all the license of using obsolete words and uncommon spellings, sometimes fatigues the ear' (*Letter to Morritt*, Sept. 26, 1811). An examination of parts of *Adonais* would seem to lend support to this view; for instance, in stanza 45 the rimes are *renown, thought, Chatterton, not, fought, loved, spot, approved, re-proved*, where each set is technically at fault. The decision of this question depends partly on the aesthetic value that is attached to the use of approximate instead of exact rimes. But Warton's implication has been met—and justly met—by a flat denial, although, of course, the English language has by no means so great a wealth of exact double rimes as the Italian. This alleged poverty—which is only comparative after all—is no drawback in English, but rather an advantage. For the very facility of rime in Italian often rather cheapens its effect, and makes it much less striking and satisfying; and the fact that so many of the rimes rest not upon the more significant part of the word, but only upon the inflexional ending, gives them much less substance and body. How often do such terminations occur as *-ente, -endo, -ate, -oso, -ia, -ino, -osi, -iri, -are* (these are all from *La Vita Nuova*)! On the other hand, of course, the fact that so many merely inflexional rimes are available reduces the temptation to let the meaning be dictated by the necessities of sound, as so often happens in Keats, and even in Browning.

The joyous day gan early to appeare;  
 And fayre Aurora from the deawy bed  
 Of aged Tithone gan herselfe to reare  
 With rosy cheekes, for shame as blushing red  
 Her golden locks for hast were loosely shed  
 About her eares, when Una her did marke  
 Clymbe to her charet, all with flowers spred,  
 From heven high to chace the chearelesse darke;  
 With mery note her lowd salutes the mounting lark.

(*Faerie Queene*, I. xi. 451-9.)

Lowell says, 'In all this there is soothingness indeed, but no slumberous monotony; for Spenser was no mere metrist, but a great composer. By the variety of his pauses . . . he gives spirit and energy to a measure whose tendency it certainly is to become languorous. He knew how to make it rapid and passionate at need, as in such verses as

But he, my lion, and my noble lord,  
 How does he find in cruel heart to hate  
 Her that him loved and ever most adored  
 As the God of my life? why hath he me abhorred?'

In general, however, Spenser's own use of his stanza is noteworthy for its regularity; his methods of achieving diversity of effect were melodic rather than structural.

The use of this stanza was revived in the eighteenth century by Thomson (*Castle of Indolence*), Shenstone (*Schoolmistress*), Beattie (*The Minstrel*), and Burns (*Cotter's Saturday Night*); and was used in the nineteenth by Byron, Keats, and Shelley, as well as by Campbell (*Gertrude of Wyoming*), Scott (*Vision of Don Roderick*) and some 'Introductions', and Tennyson (*The Lotos Eaters*).

I see before me the Gladiator lie:  
 He leans upon his hand—his manly brow  
 Consents to death, but conquers agony,  
 And his droop'd head sinks gradually low—  
 And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow  
 From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,  
 Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now  
 The arena swims around him—he is gone,  
 Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch who won.  
 (Byron, *Childe Harold*, iv. 140.)

In his use of this particular measure Byron gave it astounding vigour and energy; but he never achieved the genuine Spenserian music, and *Childe Harold* will not now be considered more than a magnificent rhetorical *tour de force*. Nevertheless, it will be obvious from the example quoted that this structural form is peculiarly adapted to the presentment of striking picture-effects.

How much the nature of the subject has to do with success in the Spenserian stanza may be seen by contrasting *Childe Harold* with Thomson's *Castle of Indolence* and Tennyson's *Lotos Eaters*. Partly for this reason, and partly because of its peculiar fitness for the pictorial method of a poet with so rich and luxurious an imagination as Keats, the spirit of Spenser's measure has never been so nearly revived as in *The Eve of St. Agnes*:

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,  
 All garlanded with carven imageries  
 Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,  
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device,  
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,  
 As are the tiger-moth's deep damask'd wings;  
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,  
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,  
 A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,  
 And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,  
 As down she knelt for Heaven's grace and boon;  
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,  
 And on her silver cross soft amethyst,  
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint:  
 She seem'd a splendid angel newly drest,  
 Save wings for heaven:—Porphyro grew faint:  
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

Shelley in *The Revolt of Islam* achieves a swiftness of movement that might have been thought impossible for such a stanza. So far as this impetuosity is a matter of verse technique it is due principally to the extremely free use of overflow, although occasional feminine endings, and, within the individual lines, trisyllabic feet and an instinctive avoidance of collocations of heavy syllables, all conduce to lightness and rapidity of movement: <sup>1</sup>

Morn came,—among those sleepless multitudes,  
 Madness, and Fear, and Plague, and Famine still  
 Heaped corpse on corpse, as in autumnal woods  
 The frosts of many a wind with dead leaves fill  
 Earth's cold and sullen brooks; in silence, still  
 The pale survivors stood; ere noon, the fear  
 Of Hell became a panic, which did kill  
 Like hunger or disease, with whispers drear,  
 As 'Hush! hark! Come they yet? Just Heaven! thine hour is near!'  
 And Priests rushed through their ranks, some counterfeiting  
 The rage they did inspire, some mad indeed  
 With their own lies; they said their god was waiting  
 To see his enemies writhe, and burn, and bleed,—  
 And that, till then, the snakes of Hell had need  
 Of human souls:—three hundred furnaces  
 Soon blazed through the wide City, where, with speed,  
 Men brought their infidel kindred to appease  
 God's wrath, and while they burned, knelt round on quivering knees.  
(x. xlv-xlv.)

Of this poem Churton Collins said, 'Never since Spenser himself has the Spenserian stanza elicited such varied and such exquisite music; indeed Shelley's range is wider than his master's, for he occasionally added to the notes of Spenser the crashing and sonorous note of Byron'. But there are surely fuller and finer harmonies in the magnificent elegy of which Shelley himself said, 'it is a highly wrought piece of art, and perhaps better in point of composition than anything I have written':

<sup>1</sup> See also above, p. 253 and note.

He is a portion of the loveliness  
 Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear  
 His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress  
 Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there,  
 All new successions to the forms they wear;  
 Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight  
 To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;  
 And bursting in its beauty and its might  
 From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

. . . . .  
 That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,  
 That Beauty in which all things work and move,  
 That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse  
 Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love  
 Which through the web of being blindly wove  
 By man and beast and earth and air and sea,  
 Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of  
 The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me,  
 Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

The breath whose might I have invoked in song  
 Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,  
 Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng  
 Whose sails were never to the tempest given;  
 The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!  
 I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar,  
 Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,  
 The soul of Adonais, like a star,  
 Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

(*Adonais*, xliii, liv, lv.)

(b) *Other Schemes.* Of other forms of nine-line stanza, perhaps the most successful are that of Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott* (quoted above, Ch. XVI, § 15) and Swinburne's *Tale of Balen*, and that used in Campbell's *Battle of the Baltic*, *a b a b c d d d c*, where the peculiar effect is due to the arresting shortness of the last line, coming immediately after three lines that rime together and are all of the same structure, and riming with the long fifth line, which is structurally equivalent, as is seldom noticed, to the eighth and ninth run together.

Of Nelson and the North  
 Sing the glorious day's renown,  
 When to battle fierce came forth  
 All the might of Denmark's crown,  
 And her arms along the deep proudly shone;  
 By each gun the lighted brand  
 In a bold determined hand,  
 And the Prince of all the land  
 Led them on.

Rossetti's *The Portrait* has a rime-scheme  $ababccddc_4$ . Swinburne's *Olive* has an original symmetrical scheme of rimes  $abbcccd da$ —the first and last lines having two feet each, the others three feet.

§ 4. Groups of ten lines. The finest examples of ten-line stanzas are to be found in the various odes of Keats. The scheme of the *Ode to a Nightingale* is  $abab c d e_3 c_3 d e_3$ :

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird !  
 No hungry generations tread thee down ;  
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard  
 In ancient days by Emperor and clown :  
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path  
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,  
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn ;  
 The same that oft-times hath  
 Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam  
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Three of the other odes have a similar rime-scheme, save that the rimes of the last three lines sometimes vary in order, and the lines are all of five feet. Gray's *Ode On a Distant Prospect of Eton College* (quoted below, Ch. XXIII, § 2) has the scheme  $a_4 b_3 a_4 b_3 c c d e e d_4$ .

A short line within the stanza is the noteworthy feature of the metrical form of Arnold's *Scholar Gipsy*—a form most admirably adapted to the subject and to the reflective pastoral manner, but one from which we must not expect such harmonies as those of the Spenserian form in *Adonais*. The same scheme— $abcb c_3 a_3 d e e d_3$ —was used again in *Thyrsis*. Arnold usually, and wisely, avoided any division into sestet and quatrain :

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly !  
 For strong the infection of our mental strife,  
 Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest ;  
 And we should win thee from thy own fair life,  
 Like us distracted, and like us unblest.  
 Soon, soon thy cheer would die,  
 Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfixed thy powers,  
 And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made ;  
 And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,  
 Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours.

Campbell's *Ye Mariners of England* has the second and fourth lines riming together on one sound, the sixth, eighth, and tenth on another, while the odd lines are blank. The even lines are of three feet, the odd generally of four ; but the first is catalectic, and the

seventh is of two feet with internal rime. The eighth and tenth lines, almost identical with each other, are the same in all stanzas:

The meteor flag of England  
 Shall yet terrific burn;  
 Till danger's troubled night depart  
 And the star of peace return.  
 Then, then, ye ocean-warriors!  
 Our song and feast shall flow  
 To the fame of your name,  
 When the storm has ceased to blow;  
 When the fiery fight is heard no more,  
 And the storm has ceased to blow.

A further expansion of the tail-rime system is exemplified in Swinburne's *A Child's Laughter* and Rossetti's *Burden of Nineveh*. The body consists of two sequences of four monorimed four-foot lines with masculine endings; the tails are respectively three-foot lines with feminine rime, and four-foot lines with masculine rime (the final *Nineveh* being constant). The schemes are therefore  $aaab_3cccc_4b_3$  and  $aaabccccB_4$ .

§ 5. For eleven-lined stanzas, see Keats's *Ode to Autumn* and Shelley's *Autumn: A Dirge*:

#### AUTUMN.

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!  
 Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;  
 Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
 With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;  
 To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,  
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;  
 To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells  
 With a sweet kernel; to set budding more  
 And still more, later flowers for the bees,  
 Until they think warm days will never cease,  
 For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?  
 Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find  
 Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,  
 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;  
 Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,  
 Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook  
 S pares the next swath and all its twined flowers;  
 And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep  
 Steady thy laden head across a brook;  
 Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,  
 Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.



of three feet; the even lines rime in pairs, and the odd lines rime internally, giving a fine example of compound secondary rhythm. This remarkable interwoven pattern provides just the right support for that buoyant rhythm, with its light and rapid movement, which aids in transporting the reader to a sphere far above that of the mortals who give the name of moon to

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden  
who glides through the fleece-like clouds :

I am the daughter of earth and water,  
And the nursling of the sky ;  
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores ;  
I change, but I cannot die.  
For after the rain when with never a stain,  
The pavilion of heaven is bare,  
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams  
Build up the blue dome of air,  
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,  
And out of the caverns of rain,  
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,  
I arise and unbuild it again."

Another original form is that of his *Hymn of Pan*, which has a kind of internal and final refrain running through and binding together all the stanzas.

§ 7. Two still longer stanza-forms must be mentioned, in both of which important parts are played by three-foot lines at definite intervals amidst the five-foot lines, and by the last line acting as a constant refrain. The *Prothalamium* stanza is of eighteen lines, and is constant in form throughout—*a b b a<sub>3</sub> a<sub>3</sub> c d d c<sub>3</sub> e e f e<sub>3</sub> f f<sub>3</sub> g g<sub>3</sub>*. The influence of the *canzone* on its structure is evident, and it may be analysed in the same way into two correspondent *pedes* and a *cauda*. The *Epithalamium* stanza is less symmetrical in form, and its length varies from nineteen lines to eighteen and even seventeen, and the rime scheme is not meticulously preserved. The last line (refrain) is an alexandrine, as in the nine-line stanza, and the penultimate line always ends with the word 'sing'.



## XXII

## WHOLE POEMS OF FIXED STRUCTURE

## A. THE SONNET

§ 1. There are certain poetic forms which have the length and structure of the whole poem, not merely of the parts, fixed by convention. These are the Sonnet, the strict Pindaric Ode, and numerous forms, such as the Ballade, the Rondeau, the Villanelle, imitated from the French.

§ 2. A sonnet is a short poem, complete in itself, with unity of substance and a fixed length and metrical form, viz. fourteen heroic lines which rhyme according to a more or less conventionally fixed scheme. There are several distinct varieties.

§ 3. The sonnet strictly so called follows the laws developed by the early Italian writers and usually accepted by Petrarch, its greatest exponent. It deals with one thought, emotion, sentiment, or mood; this is put forward in the first part of the poem, and developed and completed in the second part. The second part, therefore, often takes the form of some application of the special idea contained in the first part, or some striking reflection suggested by it.

§ 4. In the regular sonnet the thought-structure corresponds with the verse-structure. The logical division coincides with the obvious formal division into two parts—of eight and six lines respectively—effected by the arrangement of rhymes. There is a pause at the end of the eighth line, and this corresponds to a turn in the thought, a change to a different aspect of the subject. This transition, however, should never amount to an abrupt break of subject; but the same topic should be taken up, though perhaps from a fresh point of view, and carried on to the conclusion. Milton's second sonnet will exemplify this. In the first eight lines he declares how time has passed, while he has apparently shown no promise of achievement. In the last six lines he declares that nevertheless he has in mind a high mission. Here then the octave makes the statement of which the sestet draws the conclusion or reflection:

## ON HIS HAVING ARRIVED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE.

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,  
 Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year!  
 My hasting days fly on with full career,  
 But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.  
 Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth  
 That I to manhood am arrived so near;  
 And inward ripeness doth much less appear,  
 That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.  
 Yet, be it less or more, or soon or slow,  
 It shall be still in strictest measure even  
 To that same lot, however mean or high,  
 Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven;  
 All is, if I have grace to use it so,  
 As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.

## ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER.

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,  
 And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;  
 Round many western islands have I been  
 Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.  
 Oft of one wide expanse had I been told  
 That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne:  
 Yet did I never breathe its pure serene  
 Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:  
 Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
 When a new planet swims into his ken;  
 Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes  
 He stared at the Pacific—and all his men  
 Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—  
 Silent, upon a peak in Darien. (KEATS.)

§ 5. In the practices of Petrarch and in the eyes of the theorists the most prominent structural feature of the Italian sonnet was its division into two parts. This was regarded as so essential that overflow of the first into the second part was carefully avoided by those who aimed at 'correctness'; and no running on of sense and rhythm from the eighth line into the ninth was allowed to obscure the pause which marked the turn in melody and thought. Nevertheless, they desired no abruptness, for the nature of this pause should be, as Pattison said, 'not full, nor producing the effect of a break, as of one who had finished what he had got to say, and not preparing a transition to a new subject, but as of one who is turning over what has been said in the mind to enforce it further' (Milton's *Sonnets*, p. 12).

§ 6. The first part, of eight lines, is called the octave, and the second part, of six lines, the sestet. The octave often appears to

be divided into two quatrains, and sometimes the sestet into two tercets. In other words, there is a strong pause not only after the eighth line, but often after the fourth and sometimes after the eleventh. This was evidently regarded as the ideal by the early Italian critics, whose theory was that the first quatrain should state a proposition, which should be proved by the second, confirmed by the first tercet, while the second tercet presents the conclusion towards which the whole sonnet is directed. According, then, to the strict divisions of the Italian sonnet, the idea or feeling that is to be expressed is brought forward in the first quatrain, and is more fully stated or developed in the second. The first tercet, if it has any separate function, leads up to the special application of the thought in the second tercet, which contains, therefore, the kernel of the whole.

Dante's sonnet *Era venuta nella mente mia* (*Vita Nuova*, § xxxv) will illustrate the elaborate division into four parts :

Era venuta nella mente mia  
 Quella donna gentil, cui piange Amore,  
 Entro quel punto, che lo suo valore  
 Vi trasse a riguardar quel ch' io facia.

Amor, che nella mente la sentia,  
 S'era svegliato nel distrutto core,  
 E diceva a' sospiri: Andate fuore;  
 Per che ciascun dolente sen partia.

Piangendo usciano fuori del mio petto  
 Con una voce, che sovente mena  
 Le lagrime dogliose agli occhi tristi.

Ma quelli, che n'uscian con maggior pena,  
 Venien dicendo: O nobile intelletto,  
 Oggi fa l' anno che nel ciel salisti.

Dante analysed this in his usual way: 'This sonnet hath three parts; in the first I say that this lady was already in my mind; in the second I tell what Love therefore did to me; in the third I tell of the effects of Love. The second begins here: "*Amor che*"; the third here: "*Piangendo usciano*". This part divides itself into two; in one I say that all my sighs issued forth speaking; in the other I tell how some of them said certain words different from the others. The second begins here: "*Ma quelli*".'

In a few of Dante's sonnets there is apparently a final couplet, *c d d d c c*; <sup>1</sup> a few preserve the original rime-scheme of the octave,

<sup>1</sup> This arrangement also appears casually in Petrarch.

*a b a b a b a b*,<sup>1</sup> which the metricians interpreted as 'four *pedes*'; and a few have no regular turning or pause at the end of the octave.

The tercet division is rarely observed in English, and by no means regularly in Italian, and the only safe general law is that the thought or sentiment which forms the theme or topic is introduced in the octave and elaborated in the sestet. The quatrain division may be seen in both the sonnets quoted above, and Rossetti's sonnets, e. g. *House of Life*, ii and lxx, sometimes show both quatrain and tercet division; but the bulk of English sonnets of the regular type disregard even the quatrain division, as e. g. Milton's fifteenth sonnet (to Fairfax), and Wordsworth's *Westminster Bridge* :

TO THE LORD GENERAL FAIRFAX.

Fairfax, whose name in arms through Europe rings,  
 Filling each mouth with envy or with praise,  
 And all her jealous monarchs with amaze,  
 And rumours loud that daunt remotest kings,  
 Thy firm unshaken virtue ever brings  
 Victory home, though new rebellions raise  
 Their Hydra heads, and the false North displays  
 Her broken league to imp their serpent wings,  
 O yet a nobler task awaits thy hand  
 (For what can war but endless war still breed?)  
 Till truth and right from violence be freed,  
 And public faith cleared from the shameful brand  
 Of public fraud. In vain doth Valour bleed,  
 While Avarice and Rapine share the land.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE.

(*Early Morning.*)

Earth has not anything to show more fair :  
 Dull would he be of soul who could pass by  
 A sight so touching in its majesty :  
 This city now doth like a garment wear  
 The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,  
 Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie  
 Open unto the fields, and to the sky :  
 All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.  
 Never did sun more beautifully steep  
 In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill ;  
 Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep !  
 The river glideth at his own sweet will :  
 Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep ;  
 And all that mighty heart is lying still !

<sup>1</sup> See Gray's sonnet in § 10.

§ 7. The rime-scheme of the regular sonnet is arranged so as to correspond with the scheme of thought. The octave has only two rime-sounds, always arranged in the same order, *abbaabba*; the first, fourth, fifth, and eighth lines rime together and form a kind of framework into which are fitted the remaining lines, which also have a common rime. The octave may also be said to consist of two quatrains with enclosing rimes similar in quality. The sestet is in Petrarch most frequently divided into tercets by the rime, *cdecde*. Next in frequency is a sestet of two riming sounds, *cdecdd*.<sup>1</sup> Then there are other arrangements of three riming sounds; the most frequent being *cdedce*, and less frequent are *cdedec*, *cdeedc*. Sidney, in some score of his sonnets, had adopted a symmetrical scheme of tercets favoured by Ronsard and his followers, *ccdeed*; e.g.

You that do search for every purling spring  
Which from the ribs of old Parnassus flowes,  
And every flower, not sweet perhaps, which growes  
Neere thereabouts, into your poesie wring.  
Ye that do dictionarie's methode bring  
Into your rimes, running in ratling rowes;  
You that poore Petrarch's long-deceased woes  
With new-borne sighes and demisen'd wit do sing;  
You take wrong wayes; those far-fet helps be such  
As do bewray a want of inward tuch,  
And sure, at length stolne goods doe come to light;  
But if, both for your love and skill, your name  
You seeke to nurse at fullest breasts of Fame,  
Stella behold, and then begin to endite.

Swinburne sometimes uses the same scheme and also *ccdede*<sup>2</sup> (see his sonnet on *Webster*). See also Rossetti's *House of Life*, xix, and a well-known sonnet by Wordsworth:

#### THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND.

Two voices are there: one is of the sea,  
One of the mountains; each a mighty voice:  
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,  
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!  
There came a tyrant, and with holy glee  
Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven:  
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,  
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.  
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:  
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left;

<sup>1</sup> Probably to be regarded as two tercets on the *terza rima* principle, not as three groups of two.

<sup>2</sup> A scheme in vogue among nineteenth-century French sonneteers.

For, high-souled maid, what sorrow would it be  
 That mountain floods should thunder as before,  
 And ocean bellow from his rocky shore,  
 And neither awful voice be heard by thee!

§ 8. Any arrangement which left the last two lines riming as a couplet was looked upon with disfavour. As Pattison says, 'The principle of the sonnet structure is continuity of thought and metre; the final couplet interrupts the flow, it stands out by itself as an independent member of the construction; the wave of emotion, instead of being carried on to an even subsidence, is abruptly checked and broken as against a barrier. . . . While the conclusion should leave a sense of finish and completeness, it is necessary to avoid anything like epigrammatic point. . . . The emphasis is nearly, but not quite, equally distributed, there being a slight swell, or rise, about the middle. The sonnet must not advance by progressive climax, or end abruptly; it should subside, and leave off quietly' (*op. cit.*, ii. 13).

Professor Courthope explains this avoidance of the final couplet as follows: 'In the first eight lines the thought ascends to a climax; this part of the sonnet may be said to contain the premises of the poetical syllogism. In the last six lines the idea descends to a conclusion, and as the two divisions are of unequal length it is necessary that the lesser should be the more individualized. Hence while, in the first part, the expression of the thought is massed and condensed by reduplications of sound, and the general movement is limited by quatrains; in the second part the clauses are separated by the alternation of the rhymes, the movement is measured by tercets, and the whole weight of the rhetorical emphasis is thrown into the last line' (*Hist. of Eng. Poetry*, ii. 91).

Despite this objection to the final couplet it is found in two of the most famous of English sonnets based on the Italian model; viz. Blanco White's sonnet *To Night*, praised so superlatively by Coleridge and Leigh Hunt, and Wordsworth's 'Scorn not the Sonnet':

#### TO NIGHT.

Mysterious Night! when our first parent knew  
 Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,  
 Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,  
 This glorious canopy of light and blue?  
 Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,  
 Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,  
 Hesperus with the host of heaven came,  
 And lo! Creation widened in man's view.

Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed  
 Within thy beams, O Sun! or who could find,  
 Whilst flow'r and leaf and insect stood revealed,  
 That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind!  
 Why do we then shun Death with anxious strife?  
 If Light can thus deceive, wherefore not Life?

Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,  
 Mindless of its just honours; with this key  
 Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody  
 Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;  
 A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;  
 With it Camöens soothed an exile's grief;  
 The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf  
 Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned  
 His visionary brow; a glow-worm lamp,  
 It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land  
 To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp  
 Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand  
 The Thing became a trumpet, whence he blew  
 Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

The final couplet was introduced by Wyatt, and was frequently used by Sidney and Drummond, and in 16 per cent. of the sonnets of Wordsworth and Rossetti.

§ 9. Modifications of the Italian sonnet are more frequent than the strict form. There was at first in Italy an experimental period, but in the best days of the sonneteering vogue and in the practice of Petrarch there seems to have been some sort of general agreement as to the most satisfactory form of the sonnet. After this, no unnaturally, came a period when greater freedom was claimed and the restraints of form were slackened. But in all probability even before this the recognized laws were not so absolutely rigid as has sometimes been supposed; and the greatest English sonneteers doubtless paid far less attention to the theories of the critics than to the practice of the poets.

Dante says of the *canzone*, 'The art of the *canzone* depends on the division of the musical setting'; and the same was probably true of the sonnet. The bipartition of the sonnet was a natural result of the practice of writing all lyrics to be set—at least in theory—to music. Usually the melody for the first quatrain would be repeated for the second, and then there would be a turn (*volta*) or transition (*diesis*) to the second section (the *sirma* or *coda*). In correspondence with these musical divisions, divisions of the poetic material would naturally be invited, i.e. after the two quatrains (*pedes*), and also between the two.

At the same time some stanzas, as Dante says, 'proceed throughout to one continuous "ode", i.e. without the repetition of any musical phrase and without any *diësis*' or transition from one melodic section to another (also called *volta* 'when speaking to the common people'). Sonnets of this type too were written by the Italians (including Dante); and Milton, as we might have expected from his blank-verse practice, frequently adopted the same plan.

(a) *Milton*. Milton's sonnets usually follow the rime-scheme of the strict Italian sonnets. His sestet arrangements are *c d c d c d* (in seven sonnets), *c d e d c e* (five), *c d e d c e* (two), *c d d c d c* (two), *c d c e e d* (one), and *c d d c e e* (one). He is, however, not strict with regard to the division between octave and sestet, only seven sonnets having the usual pause at the end of the eighth line.<sup>1</sup> In XVIII, *On the Late Massacre in Piedmont*, the thought is really continuous from beginning to end, despite the pauses, only one of which, that in the middle of the tenth line, gives any effect of bipartition. There is no pause at the end of the eighth line, and only a comma-pause at the end of the fourth. Milton was in fact following in his sonnets some of the principles that governed the construction of paragraphs in his blank verse :

#### ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT.

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones  
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold ;  
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old  
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,  
Forget not : in thy book record their groans  
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold  
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled  
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans  
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they  
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow  
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway  
The triple Tyrant ; that from these may grow  
A hundredfold, who, having learned thy way,  
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

He does not altogether disregard the bipartition and the *volta*, but he insists on freedom and variety. The eighth and ninth lines

<sup>1</sup> There is some precedent for this even in the Italian sonnet. Milton may have been aware of this, but was in any case quite independent enough to disregard any rigid law that limited his freedom. Dr. J. S. Smart, however, has just pointed out that Milton possessed a copy of the sonnets of della Casa, a sixteenth-century writer who was fond of avoiding a break between octave and sestet.



are frequently connected by *enjambement* or overflow; the pause that marks the division between the first and second parts falling within the seventh, eighth, or ninth line, or at the end of the seventh, or ninth, or even the eleventh. Wordsworth suggested that this was done 'not merely to gratify the ear by variety and freedom of sound, but also to aid in giving that pervading sense of intense unity in which the excellence of the Sonnet has always seemed to me to consist':

#### ON HIS BLINDNESS.

When I consider how my light is spent  
 Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,  
 And that one talent which is death to hide  
 Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent  
 To serve therewith my Maker, and present  
 My true account, lest He returning chide.  
 'Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?'  
 I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent  
 That murmur, soon replies, 'God doth not need  
 Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best  
 Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state  
 Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,  
 And post o'er land and ocean without rest;  
 They also serve who only stand and wait.'

(b) *Modification of the rime-scheme by Sidney and Wordsworth.* Wordsworth wrote a number of his 500 sonnets after the correct Italian model, and in many others he follows Milton's example of not preserving with exactitude the division at the end of the eighth line. But he also introduced a variation into the rime-system of the octave; he preserves the outer frame of the enclosing rime, but for the inner or enclosed rime of the second quatrain he uses a new sound, so that the formula is *abbaacca*. Over 16 per cent. have the final couplet that was avoided by the Italians.<sup>1</sup>

#### ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC.

Once did She hold the gorgeous East in fee;  
 And was the safeguard of the West: the worth  
 Of Venice did not fall below her birth,  
 Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.  
 She was a Maiden City, bright and free;  
 No guile seduced, no force could violate;  
 And, when She took unto herself a Mate,  
 She must espouse the everlasting Sea.

<sup>1</sup> Professors Mayor and Courthope both make the astonishing mistake of saying that the final couplet was not used by Wordsworth in his sonnets with this modified Italian form.

And what if she has seen those glories fade,  
 Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;  
 Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid  
 When her long life hath reached its final day:  
 Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade  
 Of that which once was great, is passed away.

## BY THE SEA: EVENING.

It is a beauteous Evening, calm and free  
 The holy time is quiet as a Nun  
 Breathless with adoration; the broad sun  
 Is sinking down in its tranquillity;  
 The gentleness of heaven is on the sea:  
 Listen! the mighty Being is awake,  
 And doth with his eternal motion make  
 A sound like thunder—everlastingly.  
 Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,  
 If thou appear'st untouched by solemn thought,  
 Thy nature is not therefore less divine:  
 Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;  
 And worshipping'st at the Temple's inner shrine,  
 God being with thee when we know it not.

A sonnet by Gray has a regular alternate arrangement of two rimes in the octave, *abababab, cdcdcd*, which was one of the earliest rime-schemes of the Italians. This is also found in some of Sidney's earlier sonnets (e.g. his third and fourth, *ababababccdeed*).

## ON THE DEATH OF RICHARD WEST.

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,  
 And reddening Phoebus lifts his golden fire;  
 The birds in vain their amorous descants join;  
 Or cheerful fields resume their green attire:  
 These ears, alas! for other notes repine,  
 A different object do these eyes require;  
 My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;  
 And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.  
 Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,  
 And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;  
 The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;  
 To warm their little loves the birds complain;  
 I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,  
 And weep the more because I weep in vain.

Sidney's sixth sonnet shows a slight variation, *ababbabaccdeed*.

Wordsworth has also somewhat eccentric mixtures, as *abbaabab, ababbaab, abababba, abbaacac, abbabccb*; always, however, being careful to have one common rime, if not two, binding together the two quatrains into a whole.

§ 10. Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, evidently considered English too poor in rimes for successful imitation of the Italian model; for, abandoning both the Italian rime-scheme and thought-scheme, he developed a form which consisted of three quatrains, each riming alternately on two sounds, peculiar to that quatrain, and a final couplet, *abab, cdcd, efef, gg*. In the quatrains the thought is by degrees amplified and developed to its culmination in the couplet, which is usually separated from the third quatrain by a pause. So that this form, which favours cumulative touches and continuity of movement rising to an epigrammatic close, is altogether different in effect from the regular sonnet, and is sometimes distinguished by the names of *English Sonnet*, *Quatorzain*, or more frequently after its greatest exponent, the *Shakespearian Sonnet*:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
 Admit impediments. Love is not love  
 Which alters when it alteration finds,  
 Or bends with the remover to remove :  
 O, no ! it is an ever-fixed mark,  
 That looks on tempests and is never shaken ;  
 It is the star to every wandering bark,  
 Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.  
 Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
 Within his bending sickle's compass come ;  
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom.  
 If this be error and upon me proved,  
 I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

(Shakespeare, *Sonnet cxvi*)

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame  
 Is lust in action ; and till action, lust  
 Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,  
 Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust ;  
 Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight ;  
 Past reason hunted, and no sooner had,  
 Past reason hated, as a swallow'd bait,  
 On purpose laid to make the taker mad :  
 Mad in pursuit, and in possession so ;  
 Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme ;  
 A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe :  
 Before, a joy proposed ; behind, a dream.  
 All this the world well knows ; yet none knows well  
 To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

(*Sonnet cxxix.*)

§ 11. Occasionally there is a turn in the thought after the eighth line, as in the Petrarchan model, the pause between the twelfth line

and the couplet being minimized. This structure is followed in the last sonnet of Keats, a poem which shows pre-eminently that quality of sweetness which Mr. Watts-Dunton said was the special characteristic of the Shakespearian form *qua* metrical form :

Bright Star! would I were steadfast as thou art—  
 Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,  
 And watching, with eternal lids apart,  
 Like Nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,  
 The moving waters at their priest-like task  
 Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,  
 Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask  
 Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—  
 No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,  
 Pillowed upon my fair love's ripening breast  
 To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,  
 Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,  
 Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,  
 Half-passionless, and so swoon on to death.

Another example of this adoption of the bipartite thought-scheme is given in Drayton's great sonnet, perhaps, in point of technique and consonance of metre and substance, the finest ever written in the Shakespearian form :

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part—  
 Nay, I have done, you get no more of me;  
 And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,  
 That thus so cleanly I myself can free;  
 Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,  
 And when we meet at any time again,  
 Be it not seen in either of our brows  
 That we one jot of former love retain.  
 Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,  
 When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,  
 When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,  
 And Innocence is closing up her eyes,  
 Now if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,  
 From death to life thou might'st him yet recover.

A modification of Surrey's scheme appears frequently in Sidney and Drummond, who make the second quatrain continue the rimes of the first, *ababababcdcdee* :

I never drank of Aganippe well,  
 Nor ever did in shade of Tempe sit;  
 And Muses scorn with vulgar brains to dwell;  
 Poore layman I, for sacred rites unfit.  
 Some doe I heare of poets' furie tell,  
 But, God wot, wot not what they meane by it,  
 And this I sweare by blackest brooke of hell,  
 I am no pick-purse of another's wit.

How fall's it then, that with so smooth an ease  
 My thoughts I speake; and what I speake doth flow  
 In verse, and that my verse best wits doth please?  
 Ghesse we the cause! What, is it this? Fie, no.  
 Or so? Much lesse. How then? Sure thus it is,  
 My lips are sweet, inspired with Stella's kisse.

Loving in truth, and faine in verse my love to show,  
 That she, deare Shee, might take som pleasure of my paine,—  
 Pleasure might cause her reade, reading might make her know,  
 Knowledge might pitie winne, and pitie grace obtaine,—  
 I sought fit wordes to paint the blackest face of woe;  
 Studying inventions fine her wit to entertaine,  
 Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow  
 Some fresh and fruitfull shower upon my sun-burn'd brain.  
 But words came halting out, wanting Invention's stay;  
 Invention, Nature's childe, fledde step-dame Studie's blowes;  
 And others' feete still seem'de but strangers in my way.  
 Thus, great with childe to speak, and helpless in my throwes,  
 Biting my trewand pen, beating myself for spite;  
 Foole, said my Muse to me, looke in thy heart and write.

In these two sonnets by Sidney (the latter of which is written in alexandrines throughout), it must be clear how the obvious bipartition in thought is marked not merely by the pause after the eighth line, but also by the community of rime between the first two quatrains. He seems to have been attempting a compromise between Surrey's scheme and the strict Italian form.

The most notable fault of Shakespeare's sonnets is the lamentable weakness and even paltriness into which the final couplets often fall, as in the fine 'Let me not to the marriage of true minds', which ends:

If this be error and upon me proved,  
 I never lived, nor no man ever loved.

Even when the final couplet is not so markedly feeble, as in No. xxx, or in 'The expense of spirit in a waste of shame' (cxxix), which ends:

All this the world well knows; yet none knows well  
 To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

it is still often awkwardly joined to the body and stands out as a metrical afterthought or appendage, a mere filling-up of the form. Unfortunately, in many cases these flaws are made even more glaring by the commonplace weakness of rime that has been noticed in a previous chapter (Ch. XVI, § 1; see Sonnets iii, iv, xiii, cxxii, cxxiii amongst others).

These two faults were avoided by Sidney in the last-quoted

sonnet, and by Drayton and Keats, and by Shakespeare in such sonnets as Nos. xxix, lxvi, and cxlvii.

§ 12. The Spenserian sonnet also consists of three quatrains and a couplet, but each quatrain is bound to the next by a common rime being interlaced, *a b a b, b c b c, c d c d, e e*, on the same principle as in the Spenserian stanza. Spenser frequently, but not always, makes a distinct division after the second quatrain:

One day I wrote her name upon the strand;  
 But came the waves and washed it away:  
 Agayne, I wrote it with a second hand;  
 But came the tyde, and made my paynes his pray  
 Wayne man, sayd she, that doest in vaine assay  
 A mortall thing so to immortalize;  
 For I my selve shall lyke to this decay,  
 And eek my name bee wyped out lykewize.  
 Not so, quod I; let baser thyngs devize  
 To dy in dust, but you shall live by fame:  
 My verse your vertues rare shall éternize,  
 And in the heavens wryte your glorious name.  
 Where, whenas death shall all the world subdew,  
 Our love shall live, and later life renew. (*Amoretti*, No. lxxv.)

### ADDENDUM

Why has the length of the sonnet been fixed so decisively? Evidently because early experience showed that a quatorzain was long enough for adequate expression of a not too complex sentiment or emotional point of view, while not so long as to invite diffuseness, over-elaboration of imagery, and padding out with otiose verbiage. A shorter form might preclude fullness of imagery and completeness of expression, while a longer form might endanger unity of mental impression. It was partly a question of the range of attention—a longer stanza could hardly be held in the mind as a unit—and also a question of formal unity. While the structure had not to be so intricate and extensive that it could not be grasped as a whole, it had to have sufficient complexity to satisfy the mind's craving for unity amidst variety within the bounds of one poem. A sixteen-line structure would clearly invite a too symmetrical bipartition, and make the second half a replica of the first. The virtue of unequal parts being granted, it was equally necessary that, if we have the presentation of an idea or feeling followed by its special application or some other conclusion, the second part must be the shorter, but at the same time equally weighty. Thus balance without uniformity might be secured, and the outcome was the normal octave and

sestet division. The fourteen-line structure is also big enough to allow of minor systems (quatrains and tercets) within it, which assist the mind to group the structure of the whole as a whole, more easily, for example, than it grasps the somewhat shorter stanzas of *Thyrsis* and the odes of Keats.

## XXIII

## WHOLE POEMS OF FIXED STRUCTURE—B. THE ODE

§ 1. The Ode in its simplest and original meaning was a poem suitable for singing; but the term has usually been restricted to a special kind, which the Oxford English Dictionary defines as 'a rimed (rarely unrimed) lyric, often in the form of an address; generally dignified or exalted in subject, feeling, and style'. As a lyric it is not so much an impulsive outburst of direct, personal emotion, as the considered, and often elaborate, expression of mature impassioned thought, of emotion recollected in tranquillity. It is marked by loftiness of aim, by solemnity and majesty of treatment and style, and, in particular, its verse aims at a serene dignity of movement and at a stately grandeur of harmony.

§ 2. From the metrical point of view, however, there are different kinds of odes. The Lesbian ode was little more than a song, often quite light in character, written in an indeterminate series of regular, and usually short and simple, stanzas. As the types perfected by Alcaeus, Sappho, and Anacreon were all practised by Horace, this kind is often called the Horatian ode. For examples in short stanzas it will be sufficient to mention Marvell's *Ode on Cromwell's Return from Ireland*, Collins's *Ode to Evening*, and to quote the following result of Pope's precocity.

## ODE ON SOLITUDE.

Happy the man whose wish and care

A few paternal acres bound,  
Content to breathe his native air,  
In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,

Whose flocks supply him with attire,  
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,  
In winter fire

Blest, who can unconcern'dly find

Hours, days, and years slide soft away  
In health of body, peace of mind,  
Quiet by day,

~~Sound sleep by night ; study and ease,  
Together mixt ; sweet recreation ;  
And innocence, which most doth please  
With meditation.~~

~~Thus let me live, unseen, unknown,  
Thus unlamented, let me die,  
Steal from the world, and not a stone  
Tell where I lie.~~

§ 3. As an example of an ode with longer equal stanzas the last four stanzas of Gray's *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* are here quoted :

Alas ! regardless of their doom,  
The little victims play ;  
No sense have they of ills to come,  
Nor care beyond to-day :  
Yet see how all around 'em wait  
The ministers of human fate,  
And black Misfortune's baleful train !  
Ah ! show them where in ambush stand  
To seize their prey the murth'rous band !  
Ah ! tell them they are men !

These shall the fury Passions tear,  
The vultures of the mind,  
Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,  
And Shame that skulks behind ;  
Or pining Love shall waste their youth,  
Or Jealousy, with rankling tooth,  
That inly gnaws the secret heart ;  
And Envy wan, and faded Care,  
Grim-visaged, comfortless Despair,  
And Sorrow's piercing dart.

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,  
Then whirl the wretch from high,  
To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,  
And grinning infamy ;  
The stings of Falsehood those shall try,  
And hard Unkindness' alter'd eye,  
That mocks the tear it forced to flow ;  
And keen Remorse, with blood defiled,  
And moody Madness, laughing wild  
Amid severest Woe.

To each his suff'rings ; all are men  
Condemn'd alike to groan ;  
The tender for another's pain,  
Th' unfeeling for his own.  
Yet, ah ! why should they know their fate,  
Since sorrow never comes too late,



And happiness too swiftly flies?  
 Thought would destroy their paradise.  
 No more! Where ignorance is bliss,  
 'Tis folly to be wise.

See also Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty* (Ch. XXI, § 2, *b*, ii), and Keats's *Odes to a Nightingale* and *To Autumn* (Ch. XXI, §§ 4 and 5).

§ 4. The true Pindaric Ode, i. e. the choral or Doric form as written by Pindar, was of a majestic type distinguished metrically by complicated correspondences between anisometrical stanzas. Though complex, it was yet quite symmetrical in structure, as in its original form it was intended to be sung by a chorus, and accompanied not only by music but also by movement. The chorus moved round the altar in a clockwise direction from one side of the stage to the other; during this movement was sung one section of the ode, called the *strophe*. During the return movement, the *antistrophe*, a section exactly similar in metrical composition, was sung. The chorus then stood still while singing the *epode*, another part with a different metrical structure. The whole was repeated twice again, or more often.

§ 5. The regular Pindaric ode, then, is a poem of nine (or, less frequently, of some higher multiple of three) stanzas divided into correspondent parts (triads) of three stanzas each. The first two stanzas, the *strophe* and *antistrophe*, have lines of varying lengths, but each line in the *antistrophe* is similar in metrical structure to the corresponding line in the *strophe*; and in the English form the rime-scheme is similar. The *epode* differs in length and metrical arrangement. The structure of the *strophe* and *antistrophe* is repeated in the succeeding triads, as also is that of the *epode*. The metre and rime-system of Gray's *Progress of Poetry* may be represented thus:

	1. <i>Strophe.</i>	2. <i>Antistrophe.</i>	3. <i>Epode.</i>
I.	<i>a b b a c c d d e e f j</i> 4 5 4 5 4 4 5 4 5 4 4 6	<i>a b b a c c d d e e f j</i> 4 5 4 5 4 4 5 4 5 4 4 6	<i>a a b b a c c d d e d e f g f g h h</i> 4 4 4 4 3 4 4 4 4 4 5 5 5 5 5 6
II.	<i>ditto.</i>	<i>ditto.</i>	<i>ditto.</i>
III.	<i>ditto.</i>	<i>ditto.</i>	<i>ditto.</i>

In the *epodes* even the feminine endings in lines 6, 7, 8, and 10, and the initial monosyllabic feet in lines 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, and 9, are repeated.

## THE PROGRESS OF POESY.

## A PINDARIC ODE.

## I.

Awake, Æolian lyre, awake,  
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings.  
From Helicon's harmonious springs

A thousand rills their mazy progress take;  
The laughing flowers that round them blow  
Drink life and fragrance as they flow.  
Now the rich stream of music winds along,  
Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong,  
Through verdant vales, and Ceres' golden reign:  
Now rolling down the steep amain,  
Headlong, impetuous, see it pour:  
The rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar.

Oh! sovereign of the willing soul,  
Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs,  
Enchanting shell! the sullen Cares  
And frantic Passions hear thy soft control:  
On Thracia's hills the Lord of War  
Has curbed the fury of his car,  
And dropp'd his thirsty lance at thy command:  
Perching on the scepter'd hand  
Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feather'd king  
With ruffled plumes and flagging wing:  
Quench'd in dark clouds of slumber lie  
The terror of his beak, and lightnings of his eye.

Thee the voice, the dance, obey,  
Temper'd to thy warbled lay.

O'er Idalia's velvet-green  
The rosy-crown'd Loves are seen,  
On Cytherea's day,  
With antic Sports and blue-eyed Pleasures,  
Frisking light in frolic measures;  
Now pursuing, now retreating,  
Now in circling troops they meet:  
To brisk notes in cadence beating,  
Glance their many-twinkling feet.  
Slow-melting strains their Queen's approach declare.  
Where'er she turns the Graces homage pay.  
With arms sublime, that float upon the air,  
In gliding state she wins her easy way:  
O'er her warm cheek and rising bosom move  
The bloom of young Desire, and purple light of Love.

*The Bard* has longer stanzas, but is equally strict in its metrical scheme. Ben Jonson's *Pindaric Ode to the Immortal Memory and*

*Friendship of that Noble Pair, Sir Lucius Cary and Sir Henry Morison*, showed that he was well aware of the regular structure of the Pindaric. His four *Turns* and *Counter-turns*—i. e. strophes and antistrophes—have all the same symmetrical scheme; and his four *Stands* or epodes are also similarly constructed, while differing from the Turn and Counter-turn.

§ 6. The true character of Pindar's form was, however, often overlooked until Congreve's time. Cowley had read Pindar in the original Greek, but imitating only the complexity of his structure and not the symmetry, set the fashion of writing so-called Pindaric odes in lines which varied irregularly instead of regularly, and in stanzas which had no metrical correspondence. Congreve, however, not only wrote a correct *Pindaric Ode on the Victorious Progress of Her Majesty's Arms under the Conduct of the Duke of Marlborough*, but prefaced it by a *Discourse on the Pindaric Ode*. In this he explained that 'The following ode is an attempt towards restoring the regularity of the ancient lyric poetry, which seems to be altogether forgotten, or unknown, by our English writers. There is nothing more frequent among us than a sort of poems entitled Pindaric Odes, pretending to be written in imitation of the manner and style of Pindar, and yet I do not know that there is to this day extant, in our language, one ode contrived after his model.'<sup>1</sup> . . .

'The character of these late Pindarics is a bundle of rambling incoherent thoughts, expressed in a like parcel of irregular stanzas, which also consist of such another complication of disproportioned, uncertain, and perplexed verses and rhymes. . . .

'On the contrary there is nothing more regular than the odes of Pindar, both as to the exact observation of the measures and numbers of his stanzas and verses, and the perpetual coherence of his thoughts. . . .

'The liberty which he took in his numbers, and which has been so misunderstood and misapplied by his pretended imitators, was only in varying the stanzas in different odes; but in each particular ode they are ever correspondent one to another in their turns, and according to the order of the ode.

'[Pindar's odes] consisted oftenest of three stanzas;<sup>2</sup> the first was called the strophe, from the version or circular motion of the singers in that stanza from the right hand to the left. The second

<sup>1</sup> Congreve seems to have forgotten Ben Jonson.

<sup>2</sup> This must mean, of course, three kinds of stanzas.

stanza was called the antistrophe, from the contraversion of the chorus; the singers, in performing that, turning from the left hand to the right, contrary always to their motion in the strophe. The third stanza was called the epode, . . . which they sung in the middle, neither turning to the one hand nor the other.

'The method observed in the composition of these odes was therefore as follows: The poet having made choice of a certain number of verses to constitute his strophe, or first stanza, was obliged to observe the same in his antistrophe, or second stanza; and which accordingly perpetually agreed whenever repeated, both in number of verses and quantity of feet: he was then again at liberty to make a new choice for his third stanza, or epode; where accordingly he diversified his numbers as his ear or fancy led him: composing that stanza of more or fewer verses than the former, and those verses of different measures and quantities, for the greater variety of harmony, and entertainment of the ear.

'But then . . . every epode in the same ode is eternally the same in measure and quantity, in respect to itself; as is also every strophe and antistrophe, in respect to each other. . . .

'However, though there be no necessity that our triumphal odes should consist of the three aforementioned stanzas; yet if the reader can observe that the great variation of the numbers in the third stanza . . . has a pleasing effect in the ode, and makes him return to the first and second stanzas with more appetite than he could do, if always cloyed with the same quantities and measures, I cannot see why some use may not be made of Pindar's example to the great improvement of the English ode. There is certainly a pleasure in beholding anything that has art and difficulty in the contrivance; especially if it appears so carefully executed that the difficulty does not show itself till it is sought for. . . . Nothing can be called beautiful without proportion. When symmetry and harmony are wanting neither the eye nor the ear can be pleased. Therefore poetry . . . should not be destitute of them; and of all poetry, especially the ode, whose end and essence is harmony.'

Congreve has shown us, said Johnson, 'that enthusiasm has its rules, and that in mere confusion there is neither grace nor greatness'.

§ 7. Although there is an obvious harmonic value in the Pindaric arrangement, it is evident that 'we having no chorus to sing our odes', as Congreve himself observed, or to move in time with the

music, much of the original significance and necessity of that arrangement has disappeared. It has therefore seemed sufficient to some poets to preserve correspondence of sound in less elaborate and complicated forms, which may be classed as modified Pindarics. Collins, for instance, sometimes placed the epode *between* the strophe and antistrophe, as in the *Ode to Fear* and the *Ode on the Poetical Character*. In the *Ode to Liberty* there are two epodes, one after the strophe, and another after the antistrophe. In the *Ode to Mercy* there is only strophe and antistrophe.

Collins always makes his strophe and antistrophe anisometrical, while the epodes are always isometrical, being contrasted in their simplicity with the complexity of the former. The epode has uniform four-foot couplets in all but the *Ode to Fear*, where there are five elegiac quatrains. The two epodes in *Liberty* are not equal in length. In *Liberty* and *The Poetical Character* the correspondence of metres in strophe and antistrophe is exact; in *Mercy* the antistrophe has two four-foot lines where the strophe has five-foot lines; *Fear* has an extra line in the antistrophe and a slight variation in its riming after line 8. It is clear then that Collins, though aiming at a general correspondence and proportion of sound, sometimes did not achieve it in every detail.

In Shelley's *Ode to Naples* the arbitrary character of the divisions is more apparent still. It has two epodes first, then two strophes, four antistrophes, and two concluding epodes. There is a certain amount of correspondence in the rime-schemes, e.g. between epodes  $I\alpha$  and  $I\beta$ , epodes  $II\alpha$  and  $II\beta$ , strophe  $\alpha 1$  and antistrophe  $\alpha 1$ , strophe  $\beta 2$  and antistrophe  $\beta 2$ . But none of these pairs is similar to another pair; and the two remaining antistrophes  $\alpha\gamma$  and  $\beta\gamma$  have no correspondence.

§ 8. One edition of Coleridge's *Ode on the Departing Year* consists of two strophes, an epode, two antistrophes, and a long second epode. The only correspondence, however, is between strophe I and antistrophe I (stanzas i and iv). Here the ode is back again in its Cowleyan form, whose 'lax and lawless versification', as Johnson suggested, 'concealed the deficiencies of the barren, and flattered the laziness of the idle'. What Cowley's odes could not do was indicated by Congreve; Johnson too criticized 'the uncertainty and looseness of his measures', and after showing that Cowley 'takes the liberty of using in any place a verse of any length, from two syllables to twelve', stated the important law that 'The

great pleasure of verse arises from the known measure of the lines, and uniform structure of the stanzas, by which the voice is regulated, and the memory relieved.' Coleridge was evidently as mindful of this law in writing his noble ode on *France* as he was forgetful of it in his others. The irregular type, however, always remained popular, and some of our most famous odes have made noble use of the rhythmic freedom it affords, although, as for instance in Wordsworth's *Immortality* ode, some of the metrical transitions have produced trivial and incongruous effects. Other notable examples of the irregular ode are Dryden's *St. Cecilia's Day* and *Alexander's Feast*, Tennyson's *On the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, and some examples by Coventry Patmore. Mention should also be made of some fine odes by two American writers—Bayard Taylor and James Russell Lowell.

The dangers inherent in this irregular form have been indicated above and in a previous chapter (on *Vers Libres*, Ch. XVIII). On the other hand, the complex correspondences of the choric ode must have been more easily perceived in the mass when singing was accompanied by the stately movement of a slow dance. Perhaps in English this might be achieved on a smaller scale without the aid from music and visible movement, but one of the characteristics of the Pindaric ode was its very capaciousness and fullness. For the Lesbian ode, with its simple sequence of symmetrical stanzas, was admirably adapted for 'comparatively short flights of passion or emotion, ardent or contemplative, and personal or patriotic'.<sup>1</sup> But those who would emulate the Theban eagle require the freer, larger, and yet more elaborate and exacting form that Pindar used. 'The Greek form, with its regular arrangement of turn, return, and after-song, is not to be imitated because it is Greek, but to be adopted because it is best. . . . The rhythmic reason of its rigid but not arbitrary law lies simply and solely in the charm of its regular variations. This can be given in English as clearly and fully, if not so sweetly and subtly, as in Greek; and should therefore be expected and required in an English poem of the same nature and proportion. . . . Not that the full Pindaric form of threefold or triune structure need be or should be always adopted: but without an accurately responsive or antiphonal scheme of music even the master of masters, who is Coleridge, could not produce, even through the superb and enchanting melodies of his *Dejection*, . . . a full and perfect rival to his ode on *France*.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Swinburne, *Dedicatory Epistle to the Collected Poems*.

On the other hand, close scholarly imitation of the framework and external form of Pindar's odes, without a corresponding fullness of imagination, afflatus, and harmonic sweep, results only in frigidity, more or less pompous. 'Law, not lawlessness,' said Swinburne, 'is the natural condition of poetic life; but the law must itself be poetic, and not pedantic, natural and not conventional.'

#### ADDENDUM

There is no positive proof that Cowley was unaware of the symmetrical tripartite structure of the correct Pindaric ode, although there is the negative evidence that he did not excuse himself for not reproducing it. He simply claims to reproduce Pindar's 'way and manner of speaking'; and his opinion that 'though the Grammarians and Critics have laboured to reduce his verses into regular feet and measures . . . yet in effect they are little better than Prose to our Eares' may imply either that the grammarians have failed (as they had with regard to the metres), or that though they have succeeded we enjoy the verse no better. Perhaps Cowley merely wanted classical precedent for writing in lines of unequal lengths, and ignored the larger symmetry.

#### XXIV

##### WHOLE POEMS OF FIXED STRUCTURE—C. CONVENTIONAL ROMANCE FORMS

§ 1. There remain for brief consideration certain conventional and intricate forms of stanza borrowed from mediaeval poetry, usually French. These have been much imitated by recent English, as well as French, poets for purposes of the lighter lyric. Examples of some or all are to be found in the poetical works of Swinburne and Henley, Lang, Dobson, and Gosse. They usually have a refrain and are rimed on a limited number of sounds; that is to say, they are based in some obvious way on the principle of repetition. In actual fact, however, the detailed structure was not, at least for a considerable time, regarded as absolutely fixed in most of the particular kinds, although the general character was unmistakably the same.

§ 2. The *Villanelle* consists of a number of tercets, usually five, all having the same rime-sounds in the same order, *a b a*, with a concluding quatrain riming on the same sounds, *a b a a*. The first line—

of the first tercet is repeated as the third line of the even tercets, and the third line is repeated as the third line of the odd tercets; and both these lines are repeated as the third and fourth lines of the concluding quatrain—*De Δ, de D, de Δ, de D, de Δ, de D Δ*.

*J'ay perdu ma tourterelle:  
Est-ce point elle que j'oy!  
Je veux aller après elle.*

*Tu regrettes ta femelle,  
Hélas! aussy fay-je moy:  
J'ay perdu ma tourterelle.*

*Si ton amour est fidelle  
Aussy est ferme ma foy,  
Je veux aller après elle.*

*Ta plainte se renouvelle;  
Tousjours plaindre je me doy:  
J'ay perdu ma tourterelle.*

*En ne voyant plus la belle,  
Plus rien de beau je ne voy;  
Je veux aller après elle.*

*Mort, que tant de fois j'appelle,  
Prends ce qui se donne à toy:  
J'ay perdu ma tourterelle,  
Je veux aller après elle.*

(JEAN PASSERAT.)

Amongst English specimens, besides several by Henley and Mr. Gosse, two excellent examples are Mr. Austin Dobson's 'O singer of the field and fold' and Ernest Dowson's *Villanelle of His Lady's Treasures*.

§ 3. The *Sestina* was a form which originated in Provence but was chiefly used in Italy. It consists of six unrimed stanzas of six lines each, with a final stanza of three lines. The same set of final words is repeated throughout the poem, though not necessarily in the same order; the concluding word of the last line of each sestet being repeated at the end of the first line of the next sestet. The same six words also occur in the final tercet, three within and three at the end of the lines:

*Ye wastefull Woodes! beare witnesse of my woe,  
Wherein my plaints did oftentimes resound:  
Ye carelesse byrds are privie to my cryes,  
Which in your songs were wont to make a part:  
Thou, pleasaunt spring, hast luld me oft asleepe,  
Whose streames my tricklinge teares did ofte augment.*

*Resort of people doth my greefs augment,  
The wallèd towns doe worke my greater woe;*



The forest wide is fitter to resound  
 The hollow Echo of my carefull cries:  
 I hate the house, since thence my love did part,  
 Whose waylefull want debarres myne eyes from sleepe.

Let stremes of teares supply the place of sleepe;  
 Let all, that sweete is, voyd; and all that may augment  
 My doole, draw neare! More meete to wayll my woe  
 Bene the wild woodes, my sorowes to resound,  
 Then bedde, or bowre, both which I fill with cries,  
 When I them see so waist, and fynd no part

Of pleasure past. Here will I dwell apart  
 In gastfull grove therefore, till my last sleepe  
 Doe close mine eyes: so shall I not augment  
 With sight of such as chaunge my restless woe.  
 Helpe me, ye banefull byrds, whose shrieking sound  
 Ys signe of dreery death, my deadly cries

Most ruthfully to tune: And as my cries  
 (Which of my woe cannot bewray least part)  
 You heare all night, when nature craveth sleepe,  
 Increase, so let your yrksome yells augment.  
 Thus all the night in plaints, the daye in woe,  
 I vowd have to wayst, till safe and sound

She home returne, whose voyces silver sound  
 To cheerefull songs can chaunge my cherelesse cries.  
 Hence with the Nightingale will I take part,  
 That blessed byrd, that spends her time of sleepe  
 In songs and plaintive pleas, the more taugment  
 The memory of hys misdeede that bred her woe.

And you that feelee no woe, | when as the sound  
 Of these my nightly cries | ye heare apart,  
 Let breake your sounder sleepe, | and pitie augment. (SPENSER.)

Here the verse-endings recur in the same cyclic order *abc def—fabcde—efabcd—defabc—cdefab—bcdefa*. Usually, however, there was a more complicated scheme of recurrence. The sixth line-ending of one stanza becomes the first of the next, the first becomes the second, the second the fourth, the third the sixth, the fourth the fifth, the fifth the third:

1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>a</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>b</i>
<i>b</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>d</i>
<i>c</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>f</i>
<i>d</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>e</i>
<i>e</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>c</i>
<i>f</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>a</i>

This is the scheme adopted by the Provençal troubadour, Arnaut Daniel, and also of a sestina in Sidney's *Arcadia*. The line-endings of the first stanza in each case are :

<i>a</i>	intra	sorrow
<i>b</i>	ongla	fortune
<i>c</i>	arma	damage
<i>d</i>	veria	publike
<i>e</i>	oncle	Nature
<i>f</i>	cambra	wayling

Arnaut's *envoi* or *tornada* has the same line-endings as the last half of the last stanza, with the end-words of the first half immediately preceding them :

(*b*) *e*  
(*d*) *c*  
(*f*) *a*

Arnautz tramet son cantar d'*ongl'* *e* d'*oncle*  
Ab grat de lieys que de sa *veri'a* l'*arma*,  
Son Dezirat, qu'a pretz dins *cambra intra*.

Sidney's *envoi* has the arrangement

(*a*) *b*  
(*c*) *d*  
(*e*) *f*

with the end-words repeated internally occurring at any part of the line :

Since *sorrow*, then, concludeth all our *fortune*,  
With all our deaths shew we this *damage publike* :  
His *nature* feares to dye, who lives still *wayling*.

Spenser's *envoi* too had the same scheme of endings, but the end-words repeated internally occurred always after the third foot, so that the stanza could be printed (as it was by R. Morris) as of six lines, alternately of three feet and of two feet, with endings in the same order as those of the first stanza.

Mr. Kipling's famous *Sestina of the Tramp-Royal* follows exactly Arnaut's scheme, as also does Mr. Gosse's *In fair Provence*. Following a minor poet of the *Pléiade* Sidney and Swinburne also wrote sestinas in which the repeated words rimed in twos or threes.<sup>1</sup>

De Gramont, a modern French prosodist and writer of sestinas, gives his opinion as follows of the most suitable function of the

<sup>1</sup> *Poems and Ballads*, Second Series, were not published till 1878, so that the suggestion for a rimed sestina may have been taken by Swinburne from de Gramont's work published in 1872.

sestina: 'La sextine en général sera l'expression d'une rêverie, dans laquelle la même idée, les mêmes objets se représenteront successivement à l'esprit avec des nuances diverses jouant et se transformant par d'harmonieuses gradations.' It requires great delicacy and skill, however, to prevent the repeated images and ideas from appearing with too great insistence.

§ 4. The name *ballade* at first denoted no very definite form, the only essentials being that the strophes should be three in number and should have a refrain. The famous *ballades* of Villon, however, have usually been accepted as the main type. These were poems of three strophes, usually of eight or ten lines (*huitains* or *dixains*), each strophe having common rimes, and the last line forming a refrain. In conclusion there was an *envoi* or half-strophe of four or five lines, corresponding in rime and refrain with the latter half of the full strophes. *Huitains* usually were written in octosyllabic lines and had three rimes, *a b a b b c b c*. *Dixains* usually were written in decasyllabic lines and had four rimes, *a b a b b c c d c d*. The scheme of a *ballade* in *huitains* therefore would be: *a b a b b c b C, a b a b b c b C, a b a b b c b C, b c b C*.

Dictes moy où, n'en quel pays,  
Est Flora, la belle Romaine;  
Archipiada, ne Thais,  
Qui fut sa cousine germaine;  
Echo, parlant quand bruyt on maine  
Dessus rivière ou sus estan,  
Qui beauté eut trop plus qu'humaine?  
*Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?*

Où est la très sage Heloïs,  
Pour qui fut chastré et puis moyne  
Pierre Esbaillart a Saint Denys?  
Pour son amour ent cest essoyne.  
Semblablement, ou est la royne  
Qui commanda que Buridan  
Fust jetté en ung sac en Seine?  
*Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?*

La royne blanche comme ung lys,  
Qui chantoit a voix de sereine;  
Berthe au grand pied, Bietris, Allys;  
Harembourges, qui tint le Mayne,  
Et Jehanne, la bonne Lorraine,  
Qu'Anglois bruslèrent a Rouen;  
Où sont elles, Vierge souveraine?  
*Mais où sont les neiges d'antan*

## ENVOI.

Prince, n'enquerez de sepmaine  
 Où elles sont, ne de cest an,  
 Que ce refrain ne vous remaine :  
*Mais où sont les neiges d'antan ?*

(Villon, *Ballade des Dames du Temps Jadis*.)

Rossetti's translation of this does not keep to the common rimes of the original. The correct form, however, has been reproduced by Henley, Andrew Lang and Swinburne, Mr. Gosse and Austin Dobson. Two or three of Henley's *ballades* have a double refrain; that is to say, each strophe of eight lines has the fourth line identical as well as the eighth: *a b a B b c b C*, *a b a B b c b C*, &c.; and the second and fourth lines of the *envoi* repeat the fourth and the eighth of the first three strophes, *b B c C*.

Chaucer wrote a number of *ballades*. These are usually in three strophes of seven five-foot lines upon the rime-royal system, with the same rimes and refrains, but the *envois* (when he gives them) are usually full strophes instead of half-strophes. *Lak of Stedfastnesse* and *Truth* (*Balade de bon Conseyl*) are of this type, *a b a b b c C*—*a b a b b c C*—*a b a b b c C*—*a b a b b c C*, although the final line of the *envoi* in the former is not exactly identical with the others. The *Compleynt to his Purse*, however, has a five-line *envoi*: *Gentillesse* has no *envoi*: nor has *To Rosemounde*, which is written in huitains. *Fortune* is a triple *ballade*—three sets of three huitains, each set with its own rimes and refrain, with a single seven-lined *envoi*. The *Compleynt of Venus*, another triple ballade, has a ten-lined *envoi*.

The *Chant-royal* is a kind of amplified ballade. It has five stanzas of eleven lines each, or sometimes ten, usually decasyllabic. As in the ballade, the last line of each stanza and of the *envoi* is identical; and the same riming sounds are used in each stanza, although in different sets of words. It was generally addressed to a prince or divine personage, and was suitably lofty in style. Its chief practitioners were Eustache Deschamps and Marot.

§ 5. The *rondel*, *rondeau*, and *triolet* are all constructed on the same principle, viz. repetition in the form of a refrain of the opening words of the poem.

The *rondel* has had a varied history, but the type usually known by that name has now a more or less fixed form. It commences with a strophe of four lines with enclosing rime, *A B b a*. The

second strophe has two lines riming with the first two lines of the poem, followed by a refrain consisting either of the first only, or of the first two lines of the first strophe, *a b A* or *a b A B*. The third strophe has four lines riming like the first strophe, followed by a refrain consisting of the first line of the first strophe, or sometimes, when the second strophe has a double refrain, of the first two lines, *a b b a A* or *a b b a A B*. Thus the whole poem might consist of twelve, thirteen, or fourteen lines.

1	2	3
<i>A B b a</i>	{ <i>a b A</i> <i>a b A B</i>	{ <i>a b b a A</i> <i>b b a A</i> <i>a b b a A B</i>

*Le Temps a laissé son manteau  
De vent, de froidure et de pluie,  
Et s'est vestu de broderie,  
De soleil luyant cler et beau.*

*Il n'y a beste ne oyseau  
Qu'en son jargon ne chant ou crie :  
Le Temps a laissé son manteau  
De vent, de froidure et de pluie.*

*Rivière, fontaine et ruisseau  
Portent en livrée jolie  
Gouttes d'argent, d'orfavrerie ;  
Chascun s'abille de nouveau.  
Le Temps a laissé son manteau.*

(CHARLES D'ORLÉANS.)

Austin Dobson's

Too hard it is to sing  
In these untuneful times

is a good example of the correct rondel with fourteen lines. 'You shun me, Chloe,' is written in four-foot lines, and Henley's 'The ways of death' in five-foot lines.

Chaucer's *Parlement of Foules* (680-92) contains a rondel of thirteen lines. The whole first strophe of three lines is repeated as the refrain of the third strophe: *C D Δ | c d C D | c d d C D Δ*.

*Now welcom, somer, with thy sonne softe,  
That hast this wintres weders overshake  
And driven away the longe nyghtes blake ;*

*Seynt Valentyn, that art ful hy on lofte,  
Thus syngen smale foules for thy sake  
Now welcom, somer, with thy sonne softe,  
That hast this wintres weders overshake.*

Wele han they cause for to gladen ofte  
 Sith ech of hem recovered hath his make;  
 Ful blisful mowe they ben when they awake.  
*Now welcom, somer, with thy sonne softe,*  
*That hast this wintres weders overshake*  
*And driven away the longe nyghtes blake.*

*Merciles Beaute*, a 'triple roundel', has the same structure (Globe ed., p. 634).

§ 6. *Rondeau* is a newer form of the word *rondel*, and on the whole it represents a later poetic form. There were originally two types, the *rondeau simple* of twelve lines, and the *rondeau double* of fifteen. Now only the latter remains, and it monopolizes the name *rondeau*. There are three strophes. The first and third are of five lines each, both riming on the same sounds in the same order, *a a b b a*. The second strophe of three lines also uses the same rime-sounds, *a a b*. After the second and third strophes is repeated by way of refrain the *rentrement*, i. e. the first two or three words of the whole poem. The formula, then, is *a a b b a—a a b Z—a a b b a Z*, where *Z* = the first half of the first verse.

*Thou fool!* if madness be so rife,  
 That, spite of wit, thou'lt have a wife,  
 I'll tell thee what thou must expect—  
 After the honeymoon neglect,  
 All the sad days of thy whole life;

To that a world of woe and strife  
 Which is of marriage the effect—  
 And thou thy woe's own architect,  
*Thou fool!*

Thou'lt nothing find but disrespect,  
 Ill words i' th' scolding dialect,  
 For she'll all tabor be, or fife;  
 Then prythee go and whet thy knife,  
 And from this fate thyself protect,  
*Thou fool!*

(CHARLES COTTON.<sup>1</sup>)

*What 'vailleth truth*, or by it to take pain?  
 To strive by steadfastness for to attain  
 How to be just, and flee from doubleness?  
 Since all alike, where ruleth craftiness,  
 Rewarded is both crafty, false, and plain.

<sup>1</sup> The rimes have changed places in the last stanza and the seventh line.

Soonest he speeds that most can lie and feign :  
 True meaning heart is had in high disdain,  
 Against deceit and cloaked doubleness,  
*What 'vaileth truth ?*

Deceived is he by false and crafty train,  
 That means no guilt, and faithful doth remain  
 Within the trap, without help or redress :  
 But for to love, lo, such a stern mistress  
 Where cruelty dwells, alas, it were in vain.  
*What 'vaileth truth ?* (WYATT.)

See also Austin Dobson's 'With pipe and flute' and the Poet Laureate's 'His poisoned shafts' (in *Shorter Poems*, Book I), both in four-foot lines, and Henley's 'What is to come', in five-foot lines.

The form of the *rondeau simple*, which seems to have fallen out of use after Marot's time, is preserved in Rossetti's version of Villon's *To Death, of his Lady*: *a b b a—a b Z—a b b a Z*.

§ 7. Swinburne in his *Century of Roundels* introduced a new form under an old name. The *Roundel* consists of three triplets of five-foot lines (in iambic-anapaestic rhythm) riming on two sounds, with a half-line refrain after the first and third. This refrain not only repeats the opening words of the first line, but also rimes with the second line. The formula then is *a b a Z, b a b, a b a Z*, where *Z* rimes with *b* and is identical with the first part of the first verse.

This form was used successfully by Ernest Dowson in *Beyond* and *Jadis*. The latter, however, was written in four-foot lines, and the former, though in five-foot lines, has not Swinburne's free anapaestic admixture.

§ 8. The *Triolet* is a much shorter poem constructed on a principle similar to that of the *rondel*. It is usually confined to eight lines, necessarily short, riming on two sounds, the whole of the fourth line being identical with the first, and the last two lines identical with the first two, *A B a A a b A B<sub>1</sub>*.

*Pour bien faire le Triolet*  
*Il faut trop d'esprit. Je m'arrête.*  
 Je ne vois plus que Briollet  
*Pour bien faire le Triolet.*  
 Oh ! mener ce cabriolet  
 Sur le mont à la double crête ! . . .  
*Pour bien faire le Triolet*  
*Il faut trop d'esprit. Je m'arrête.* (DE BANVILLE.)

*Worldly designs, fears, hopes, farewell!*  
*Farewell all earthly joys and cares!*  
 On nobler thoughts my soul shall dwell!  
*Worldly designs, fears, hopes, farewell!*  
 At quiet, in my peaceful cell,  
 I'll think on God, free from your snares;  
*Worldly designs, fears, hopes, farewell!*  
*Farewell all earthly joys and cares!*

(PATRICK CAREY.)

See also Henley's 'Easy is the Triolet', and the Poet Laureate's 'All women born are so perverse' (*Shorter Poems*, Book I).

§ 9. Delicate grace of expression and dainty workmanship are absolutely necessary for the writing of these forms. The poet must have a versatile command over rimes in a language that is rich in them. But at the same time meagreness of thought will not be hidden by any skilful elaboration of form, or mere intricacy of verbal melody, and there is great danger of the development of idea being guided by the mere suggestions of the riming sounds.

Of the various forms Mr. Gosse says that the rondel, rondeau, and triolet 'are habitually used for joyous or gay thought, and lie most within the province of *jeu d'esprit* and epigram', while the villanelle, ballade, and chant-royal 'are usually wedded to serious or stately expression and almost demand a vein of pathos'; but this distinction need not be pressed.

## ADDENDUM

The *pantoum* is a form of Malayan origin used by de Banville and de Lisle. It is in quatrains with interlaced rime, the first and third line of each stanza being identical with the second and fourth of the previous stanza, and the last line of the poem being identical with the first. The poem should also deal with two themes which are developed concurrently, one in the first half-stanzas, the other in the second halves.



## CONCLUSION

We have seen that in verse there may be several orders of metrical rhythm, primary, secondary, tertiary, the units of which are feet, lines, and stanzas; or even quaternary, as in the Pindaric ode (with the triad as its unit), the *ballade*, and the Italian *canzone*. These rhythms, again, may be simple or compound. Examples of the latter in the various orders are: primary, such verse as 'Awaiting the sensation of a short, sharp shock'; secondary, Old English verse, where each full line has two half-lines, or ballad-measure, which results from the break up of the septenary, or lines with medial rime, as in Shelley's *The Cloud*; tertiary, the Italian sonnet, where the octave had two quatrains, and perhaps originally the sestet had two tercets, or Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*. In all these there are minor as well as major units of rhythm.

There may be a conjunction of all of the three orders of rhythm, or of any two of them, or there may even be one kind alone. In *vers libres* primary rhythm alone is certain, and even that may be precarious; in blank verse there is secondary rhythm in proportion to the predominance of end-stopped over overflowing lines, and couplet rime strengthens it still further. If the couplets are written on syllabic principles the secondary may be stronger than the primary rhythm. The elements of tertiary rhythm, present in distichs, are clearer still in quatrains, and so on. The existence of a compound secondary rhythm in the ballad measure has already been noted; but in such a stanza as:

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,  
The glorious Sun uprist:  
Then all averred, I had killed the bird,  
That brought the fog and mist.  
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,  
That bring the fog and mist.

some of the minor units are themselves of a compound nature. A similar effect of the sectional rimes in Swinburne's *Armada* is made less obtrusive by his cunning distribution of pauses. It is

interesting to observe that Cowper's *Loss of the Royal George* has in different editions been arranged in stanzas of four, or six, or twelve lines respectively.

There are then infinite possibilities of varying degrees of combination of these orders of rhythm even apart from the varied modulations of primary rhythm and the counter-pointing of metrical and speech rhythms, and apart from the endless complications of stanzaic form with differences of line-length and riming scheme.

The history of verse, therefore, is the history of the way in which first one, then another, of these aspects has risen into importance—secondary rhythm, after having been weakened by the Jacobeans, reigns supreme in the time of Pope; primary rhythm comes to its own again in the Romantic age, and in the *vers libres* movement threatens to oust secondary rhythm altogether. Looked at from a slightly different angle it is a history of the fluctuating fortunes of the usually conflicting ideals of regularity and variety, which are, however, sometimes reconciled by the greatest masters.

The metrical analyst, however, must discriminate between these orders of rhythm, and, while recognizing their vital and organic connexion in the living verse, be able to hold them apart for purposes of investigation, when he realizes that they are combined in different degrees, and that no one specific formula of ratios will fit the whole range of English poetry. The larger units are naturally the easiest to isolate. The difference in kind between the units of primary, secondary, and tertiary rhythm is that there is an increasing possibility of independent existence, although they all of course, in falling degree, presuppose something larger of which they are organic parts. Whereas a stanza existing by itself is possible, a foot standing alone, unrelated to another, is something meaningless. Yet wherever there is primary rhythm feet are real units, although they have no possibility of independent existence, any more than physical feet can exist independently of the body of which they are parts; i. e. they are organic, not mathematical units. In some verse the recognition of feet depends only on the reader's method of grouping what is presented to him; but ordinarily the system of grouping shows itself unmistakably, and the intention of the poet discloses itself to the reader's perception or even forces itself on his attention. Similarly, wherever there is secondary rhythm (i.e. in all verse except *vers libres*, although it is sometimes latent

there), lines are real units, even when their limits are obscured by persistent overflow and feminine and weak endings.

But behind all this there is still another obstacle in the way of facile generalization, even if it be confined to the work of a single poet, and not merely to a poetic epoch. We are aware of differences in kind of poetic composition—didactic or satiric, dramatic, epic, lyric; and coinciding with these there are differences of metrical structure to be observed. For it is evident that if verse has any value as a medium of expression, the same type could not be expected to serve all purposes equally well. Imagine—by a grotesque effort—*The Faerie Queene* or *King Lear* in the metre of the *Essay on Man*, or *Don Juan* in *terza rima*, or *Alastor* in *ottava rima*, the *Ode to Duty* in trochaics, or Shelley's *To a Skylark* as a sonnet.

Any theory of the principles of metre which ignores all these wide possibilities of, and demands for, variety, and tries to impose a fixed unalterable type upon all ages, all poets, and all kinds of composition, is doomed to failure, because it will not fit the poetic actualities from which it ought to have been drawn. In the hands of the masters rhythm constantly modulates itself according to its theme, and while some poetic forms seem to have a peculiar, pre-ordained fitness for certain poetic functions, e.g. the sonnet, the Spenserian stanza, the *ottava rima*, the Fitzgerald-Omar stanza, yet on the other hand one flexible form like blank verse can be moulded to manifold uses. Yet beneath all this wonderful variety there is a constant principle—the one Spirit's plastic stress

. . . compelling there

All new successions to the forms they wear.'

This is the principle of rhythm. It manifests itself in varying ways and at different levels, but always according to law—there is unity in variety. The poet who ignores this loses more than half of his power and his charm; and the reader who does not perceive this loses half of the poetry that he reads.

## APPENDIX

## I. REPRESENTATION OF VERSE-RHYTHM

## A. SCANSIONAL NOTATION.

Every syllable that is accented, whether in arsis or in thesis should be marked. The simplest adequate system is probably:

heavy	stress	representing	ictus	'''
normal	„	„	„	''
light	„	„	„	'
secondary	„	„	„	`

The three latter marks may also be used for the various degrees of speech-stress that may be present in thesis:

Shócks, and the splíntering spéar, the hárd máil héwn,  
Shíeld-bréakings, and the clásh of bránds, the crásh . . .  
Smíte on the súdden, yét róde ón, and píтч'd . . .

The method of subscribed figures has the advantage that it leaves the sign ' free to represent merely incidence of ictus:

Shócks, and the splíntering spéar, the hárd mail héwn,  
3     0     0     2     0     0     2     0     2     1     2

i.e. it discriminates between speech-stress and metrical stress. The circumflex sign may however, if it is considered necessary, be used to represent ictus, regardless of the degree of stress. If foot-divisions are marked, this discrimination is, of course, unnecessary, except for those who believe in a reversed foot, when displacement of accent could be marked by the musical sign >.

The single vertical line is a well-established sign for the division into feet. It need not suggest any actual phonetic cutting, but those who fear this may indicate the feet by underlining:

Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard mail hewn

Feminine endings and anacrusis, i.e. hypermetrical syllables, may be indicated by brackets:

We stúck, nor bréath nor mótt(ion  
Her) évil beháviour.

Compensatory pause is represented by a caret below the line ; an omitted thesis being shown  $\underset{\wedge}{\text{ }}$ , an omitted arsis  $\bar{\text{ }}$ , but if a circumflex accent-sign is used to indicate an ideal beat or ictus not materialized, the caret may be omitted :

Their shóts | alóng | the dēep |  $\underset{\wedge}{\text{ }}$  slówly bōom  
That shē | did gíve | me,  $\triangle$  | whose pó|sy wás

A Suspensory (i. e. metrical) pause coinciding with a marked division in the sense and with a foot division  $\|$ , but if not coinciding with a foot division  $\|$ .

A pure caesura not coinciding with a marked sense-pause, e. g. the conventional caesura which in classical French often only involves a slight pause after an important word  $\wedge$ .

Je vins ; mais je cachai  $\wedge$  mon nom et mon pays. (RACINE.)

Chances to pass  $\wedge$  through this adventurous glade.

Hē | after hōn|our hūnts,  $\|$   $\underset{\wedge}{\text{ }}$  I | after lōve

And év|er pūshed | Sir Mō|dred,  $\|$  lēague | by lēague

Overflow may be indicated by an arrow  $\rightarrow$  :

The hēath|en ;  $\|$  Thén | he dráve  $\rightarrow$

For skeleton notation  $x$  for a syllable in thesis, without regard to length, is satisfactory ; the macron and micron ( $\text{—}$   $\text{—}$ ) mean long and short without presumption of fixed ratios as in classical prosody, and  $\text{—}$  an extra long syllable (for Greek = 3 shorts). For typical metres  $5\ x\ a$  means five feet *normally* iambic,  $6\ a\ x\ x$  six feet *normally* dactylic, and so on, the addition of a  $+$  indicating hypercatalexis.

In representing the arrangement of rimes in a stanza, dropped digits indicate the length of lines in feet. For a series it is unnecessary to repeat the digits : e. g.  $a\ b\ a\ b\ b\ c\ b\ c_5\ c_6$  means that the first eight lines are all of five feet.

## B. GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF VERSE-RHYTHM.

For purposes of elementary exposition, use might well be made of the graphic representation of the waves of sound in curves which show how variety of movement is possible in verse-rhythm without loss of the fundamental regularity.

Each wave represents one syllable, those of most consequence being the largest ; i. e. vertical distances represent strength of accent, while horizontal distances represent duration of time. When

the curve touches the base line there is a pause ; if a compensatory pause, the curve continues along the base, but if a suspensory pause the curve is broken. The shape of the waves differs according as the rhythm is rising or falling : in the former case the curve rises usually by a step (or two) and falls directly to its relative minimum ; in the latter it rises directly and falls by a step (or two).

The waves are not necessarily regular in number, height, or breadth. There may be two smaller waves instead of one small one in each foot-division, or there may be no small one at all. The arsis may not rise to its full height, the thesis may be more prominent than usual. The relative amplitude (i.e. duration) of the waves too may vary. There is, however, always some perceptible regularity, even if it is not quite exact, for in each centimetre-division (representing one metrical foot) there is one wave higher than the others in that division ; and the points at which the curve reaches its highest point in each division (i.e. its relative maxima) are approximately equidistant. In other words, the strong beats occur at equal intervals of time.



The wáy was lóng, || the wínd was cöld ;  
(normal iambic with strong masculine caesura).



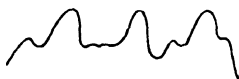
And éver púshed Sir Móddred, || léague by léague ;  
(iambic with light ictus in first foot and feminine caesura).



Afféction? póoh ! you spéak | like a gréen | ∪ gírl ;  
(iambic base with two breaks, a trisyllabic foot, compensatory pause,  
and monosyllabic foot).



After this mǒrtal change, to hér trúe sérv(ants;  
(iambic base with monosyllabic opening, trisyllabic second foot, strong  
thesis in last foot, and feminine ending.



The frív|olous bólt | of Cúpid . . .  
(Notice the difference between the 'slurred' syllables in the second  
foot, and the unmistakable trisyllabic substitution in the last examples).



Thén the | líttle | Hí'a|wátha;  
(normal trochaic).



Máke no déep | scrútiny;  
(dactylic acatalectic, with third syllable comparatively strong for thesis).



The) rǒugh river | rǎn <sup>u</sup><sub>u</sub>;  
(dactylic catalectic with anacrusis, and third syllable secondarily stressed).

## II. ADDITIONAL NOTES

## (1) Ch. V, § 9.

The difference between song and speech-verse has to be kept in mind when discussing the scansion of lines from songs set to music. In these the rhythm is dictated by the musical setting. Without the guidance of the musical accents we should naturally scan

A Spānīsh cāvall'ēr stōod in hīs retréat.

In such songs the music may be said to impose an artificial scheme of rhythm on the words:

A Spānīsh cavalier stood in his retréat ;

but the point is that the words will submit to such an imposition, and there is nothing in their nature which absolutely forbids this treatment, although, if left to themselves, they would naturally fall into a different grouping. Similarly with other examples, like

Oh! I fêar she'll be tâken by a Spānīsh galalië.

## (2) Ch. VI, § 11.

There is contemporary evidence of the existence of a distinct glide or vowel-murmur (the 'neutral' ə) after a long vowel followed by *r* in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. See Professor H. C. Wyld's *Modern Colloquial English*. The long vowel or diphthong was then partially shortened and the *r* weakened and finally lost, so that *fire* is pronounced [faɪə].

There is then justification for the assumption of a disyllabic pronunciation in some cases. This does not, however, necessitate the treatment of all instances as disyllabic, for there is no evidence that the original monosyllabic pronunciation did not exist. The two pronunciations existed side by side, and both were available for use by the poet. Shakespeare was in the happy position of having an option, as Chaucer was with regard to the final -e.

## (3) Ch. XII.

Usually in English verse metre is based upon primary as well as secondary rhythm, but sometimes in verse written on syllabic principles the primary rhythm is somewhat uncertain, as though it had been regarded as of secondary importance or even ignored. The provision of a definite number of syllables, say ten, to the line may have been regarded as sufficient by a poet who was, for the moment at least, thinking more of the matter than of the rhythm. As a result the line may be quite unrhymical in the primary sense, or it may be merely insusceptible of scansion as a five-foot or five-beat line.



Among daughters of mēn the fairest fōund; (*Par. Regained*, ii. 154.)  
 On a Sūn beam, swift as a shōoting Starr (*Par. Lost*, iv. 556.)  
 To the Gārden of blīss, thy sēat prepar'd. (*ib.*, viii. 299.)  
 By the wāters of Līfe, where ēre they sāte (*ib.*, xi. 79.)  
 Created thēe, ¶ in the Image of Gōd (*ib.*, vii. 527.)

These lines from Milton are rhythmical; but do we find five feet, even when we read the lines after a succession of unmistakable five-foot lines? We naturally read them as four-foot lines. To read them as five-foot lines we should have to assume a metrical stress on extremely light syllables—*On*, *To*, *By*, *In*—at the beginning of the line or after the caesura; and it is difficult to do this, for the words are not strong enough in these particular places to initiate decisively the changed movement.

In dancing the partner who is responsible for giving the lead must commence any change of movement decisively so as to indicate his intention, or the collusion will be imperfect. Similarly a poet must remember that he has a partner—that he is writing for a reader—and give him sufficient guidance. In lines like

Dwēls in all Hēaven charitie so deare? (*Par. Lost*, iii. 216.)

there is no possibility of mistake; and even in

Universal reproach, far worse to beare (*ib.*, vi. 34.)

the opening is sufficiently decisive to guide the reader. But the five lines previously quoted would, as five-foot lines, be poor, though Milton's; as four-foot lines they are good. Are we to assume then that they are four-foot lines, that the five-beat scheme was for the moment out of mind, and that Milton's ear told him that he had written a rhythmical line, and he was satisfied; or that he knew he had written a four-beat line, and was untroubled by the knowledge, because he found it a pleasant variation from the normal, and could plead the theoretical justification of ten syllables? There is no external proof that Milton was by deliberate intention writing five-foot verse, but there are very few lines that do not naturally and effectively scan as such, and in face of this we can hardly assert that he did not regard a determinate primary rhythm as essential.

Shakespeare has lines where a compensatory pause equal to a whole foot occurs with good rhetorical reason (see Ch. VI, § 10), but perhaps this explanation is hardly applicable to

In the vīsons of Gōd. It wās a hīll (*Par. Lost*, xi. 377.)

which differs from the other lines in the completeness of its pause.

## GLOSSARIAL INDEX OF TERMS

**Acatalectic** : not catalectic, i.e. having no syllables missing from the full metrical scheme.

**Accent** : (1) the prominence given to one sound or syllable or word over its neighbours;

(2) the stress, i.e. force or intensity, which marks that prominence;

(3) the pitch, or sharpness, or height of tone, which distinguishes the enunciation of some sounds or syllables in music or speech (see *Tonic accent*);

(4) in music: the stress or force given to certain notes which occur at regular intervals; II. 4.


**Accent, constitution of**: VIII. 3.'

**Accent, degrees of**: VIII. 4.

**Accent, functions of**: VIII. 5.

**Accent and quantity**: IX. 7 and *addendum* i, XV. 2.

**Accent in song-verse**: XIII. 9.

**Adonius** : in classical prosody the combination dactyl + trochee; ; XV. 14.

**Alcaic** : a Greek lyrical stanza, named after the Lesbian poet Alcaeus, and imitated by Horace; for its scheme see XV. 16.

**Alexandrine** : (1) a line of twelve syllables used in French heroic verse, so called either (*α*) from the fact that several poems on Alexander the Great were written in this metre, or (*β*) from the name of Alexandre Paris, who wrote one of them; (2) the corresponding English line of six iambic feet; III. 5, IV. 8, V. 9, XI. 7 (*β*), XIV. 4, 9, XX. 1 (*β*), (*c*), XXI. 3 (*a*).

**Alliteration, or head-rime** : likeness of sound at the beginning of two or more words, or of stressed syllables within words. The likeness usually consists in identity of consonant sounds, but in Old English all vowels alliterated together; II. 10 note, III. 6, XVI. 2-4.

**Alliteration in Old English**: XVI. 3.

**Alternate rime** (interlaced or cross rime) : the riming of alternate lines without intermission, *abab*; XVI. 12, XX. 3 (*b*).

**Alternating verse** : verse apparently written under the idea that strict alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables is necessary; XII. 2, 5-8.

**Amphibrach** ('short on both sides') : the Greek name for a combination (which cannot strictly be a metrical foot) of three syllables—short, long, short.

**Amphibrachic rime** : rime between two sets of three syllables of which the middle syllables are accented; XVI. 10. (Uncommon.)

**Amphimacer** ('long on both sides') : see *Cretic*.

**Anacreontics**: apparent imitations of the easy odes and epigrams in praise of love and wine by Anacreon, a sixth-century Greek. By a prosodic convention these were written in seven-syllabled lines (catalectic four-foot trochaic), and often in quatrains with interlaced rime.

**Anacrusis** or **up-beat** (Gk. ἀνὰ κρούσεις, 'up-striking'): the syllable or syllables which precede the fall of the first ictus in a verse in falling rhythm, and are therefore regarded as outside the metrical scheme of that line, whether altogether hypermetrical, as at the beginning of a stanza, or making up the final catalexis of, and rhythmically forming part of, the preceding line; II. 12, X. 2, XIV. 19. (Ger. *Auftakt*.)

**Anapaest**: a foot of three syllables, the third of which takes the metrical ictus, and is therefore in classical languages longer, and in English heavier, than the first or second; II. 13, XIV. 12.

**Anapaestic rime**: XVI. 10.

**Anapaestic substitution**: the substitution for an iamb of a foot of anapaestic form, but with its time values adjusted to the iambic rhythm; Ch. V, XI. 7 (a).

**Anglo-Saxon metre**: XVI. 3.

**Anisometrical**: composed of versés of unequal lengths.

**Anti-bacchic**: the Greek name for a combination of three syllables—short, long, long.

**Antistrophe** or **counter-turn**: that portion of a Greek choral ode which corresponds metrically to the *strophe* or first section, and was sung by the chorus while it moved back across the stage (in a counter-clockwise direction) to its original position; XXIII. 4.

**Apocope**: the cutting off of the last sound in a word.

**Appoggiatura** (short): in music a short note played as quickly as possible, its time being taken from that of the important note which it precedes (also called *acciaccatura*, which however is strictly something different). If it has any importance for prosody it is not the same as in music, where its effect was to suspend an essential note. It may have some use in explanation of such feats as 'Tis true I am that spír|it un|fórt|unate', where the first syllable -it is obviously much shorter than the second, and has hardly any distinct time-value, but should not be suppressed; cf. 'And Enid, you and he, I sée |it with jýy', 'And talk and minstrel mel|ody ént|ertained', 'The father and all three in húr|ry and fýar'; ♯ ♯ ♯ ♯.

**Approximate rime**: apparent rime in which the stressed vowels or the succeeding consonants are not exactly similar in sound; XVI. 7.

**Arsis**: that part of the foot which receives the metrical ictus; II. 9 and *add.*, VIII. 6 *et seq.*

**Arsis omitted**: XI. 7 (a).

**Ascending rhythm**: see **Rising**.

**Asclepiad**—'lesser' and 'greater': the Greek name given to lines of a particular metrical structure used alone or in combination with

shorter lines in four-lined lyric stanzas, also called *Asclepiad*—First, Second, Third, &c.; XV. 13, 14 note, 17. (See *Choriambic*.)

**Assonance**: likeness of vowel sounds; III. 6 (a), XVI. 5.

**Atonic** (= 'unaccented'); the term given to the final unaccented syllable (usually so-called -e 'mute') in a word before the caesura or end of a French verse, which, not being fully sounded, is not counted in the metrical scheme.

**Auftakt**: German term for *anacrusis*.

**Bacchius**: the Greek term for a combination of three syllables—long, long, short.

**Ballad metre**: a quatrain of alternate four-foot and three-foot lines, mostly iambic in character, but with free substitution, intermittently rimed (i.e. second and fourth only). The ballad was originally sung, and, as its name indicates, was closely connected with dancing. The even lines may perhaps be regarded as brachycatalectic four-foot lines (i.e. dimeters). A fifth and even a sixth line is sometimes added, and in general much irregularity testifies to its popular origin; XX. 3 (c). (Cognate with, and equivalent to, the *Common Measure* of church hymns; q.v.)

**Ballade**: a typical Romance lyric form, with three stanzas and usually an *envoi*, all with the same rimes and ending in a common refrain; XXIV. 4.

**Bar**: in music, the period occupied by one accented note and all other notes or rests between it and the next accent; II. 4.

**Beat**: (1) originally, the movement of the hand by which the regularity of rhythmical time is kept;

(2) the phenomenon, best described as strength, by which the end or beginning of equal periods in any rhythmical series is marked; II. 4;

(3) a rhythmical pulsation;

(4) a unit of time, a certain number of which make up the time of a bar or foot (= *mora*).

**Blank verse**: (1) strictly, any verse without rime; but (2) particularly unrimed heroic verse; XI. 6-7, XVII. 4; and (paragraph-structure) Ch. XIX.

**Bob**: (1) originally = refrain, the words repeated at the end of a stanza, but (2) particularly a very short line at the end of a long stanza which serves to connect with a kind of pendant of riming lines of different length or metre ('wheel').

**Brachycatalectic**: short of two syllables, or having a whole foot of the metrical scheme unfilled. (See *Common measure*.)

**Break**: the pause (usually only suspensory) within, but not necessarily at the centre of, a verse; Ch. IV, XI. 7 (f).

**Breve**: see *Musical Notation*.

**Broken rime**: the term given to a pair of disyllabic or trisyllabic rimes in which one member at least consists of separate words; XVI. 11.

**Burden**: see *Refrain*.

**Burns stanza**: a six-line anisometrical stanza, the body-lines being

usually four-foot iambic, and the tail-lines (fourth and sixth) of two-feet; XX. 5 (vii).

**Cadence**: the way in which the voice falls in reading; the particular modulation of a succession of rhythmical sounds. (Owing to the importance in prosody of avoiding confusion between different meanings of the word 'rhythm', it is advisable to use 'cadence' when referring to the particular movements of different lines which may have the same metrical scheme, instead of saying 'a beautiful rhythm' or 'the peculiar rhythm' of a line. There is little risk of confusion with certain technical meanings of 'cadence', and in any case this is of less consequence.)

**Caesura** ('cutting' = Gk. *τομή*): the classical term for the pause (whether coinciding or not with a distinct break in the sense) in the middle of the line, which was regarded by metrical law or convention as having a fixed position; III. 3, IV. 8, X. 4, XI. 7 (b), XX. 1 (b).

**Canzone**: a particular form of lyric, introduced into Italy from Provence; usually anisometrical and tripartite in structure, having two equal sections, called *pedes*, followed by a *cauda*.

**Carol**: originally, a dance accompanied by song, particularly of a joyful nature; later, the song alone; II. 1.

**Catalectic**: stopping short in the middle of a foot; having a syllable missing from the normal metrical scheme; X. 3, XIV. 19, 20.

**Cauda** ('tail'): (1) a technical term for one of the parts into which stanzas or short complete poems (like *canzoni*) were divided in Provençal and Italian poetic theory, e.g. two equal *pedes*, forming the body of the stanza, followed by the *cauda*; XVII. 8;

(2) the shorter (or longer) verse which recurs regularly in the *rime coulé* or tail-rime stanza; XVI. 12;

(3) in general the term may be applied to any metrically distinct stanza or group of verses, used to conclude a fairly short poem, e.g. the *envoi* of a strict *ballade*, or a very long *laisse* or batch of lines, e.g. the 'bob and wheel' in *Sir Gawayn and the Green Knight*.

**Chant-royal**: a mediaeval French lyric form of *ballade* type; XXI. 1 (a), XXIV. 4.

**Chaucerian stanza** or 'rime-royal': the seven-lined stanza, *ababbcc*, of *Troilus and Criseyde* and other poems of Chaucer; XXI. 1.

**Choree** = *trochee*, but originally used also of the equivalent *tribrach*.

**Choriambic rime**: XVI. 10.

**Choriambics**: verse in which the combination — ∪ ∪ —, apparently *choree* + *iamb*, but strictly | ˘ ˘ ˘ | ˘ |, constantly recurs (see *Asclepiad*); II. 13, XV. 17.

**Classical metre**: III. 6, IX. 2, XV.

**Closed couplet**: a couplet self-contained in sense and rhythm, separated from the next by a full pause; XVII. 2, XX. 1.

**Combative accent**: XV. *addendum*.

**Combined rhythm** (rising and falling): XIV. 22-3.

**Combined substitution:** the introduction of two equivalent feet, one monosyllabic, one trisyllabic, usually next to each other, in iambic verse, thus preserving syllabic uniformity; VII, XI. 7 (a).

**Common measure:** a quatrain of alternate four-foot and three-foot lines, in regular iambic rhythm, alternately or intermittently rimed, commonly used in church hymns; like *ballad metre* (q.v.) probably descended from the Latin (accentual) brachycatalectic iambic tetrameter through the Middle English septenary; XX. 3 (c).

**Common (quantity):** a term applied to syllables which classical prosody allowed as either long or short in value according to metrical necessity; probably of intermediate natural quantity; IX. 2.

**Common time:** music in which there is an even number of time-units to the bar; either Duple or Quadruple as distinguished from Triple time.

**Compensatory lengthening:** the lengthening experienced by an important syllable which stands alone in a monosyllabic foot, so that its duration approximates to that of a normal foot in compensation for the theoretic loss of a syllable; VI. 7.

**Compensatory pause:** the pause or 'rest' that occurs between two fully stressed syllables, or at a metrical division, helping to make up the time of a monosyllabic foot and compensate for the apparent loss of a syllable from the theoretic scheme; VI, XI. 7 (a), XV. 7 note, 18.

**Compound alliteration:** two pairs of alliterating sounds in succession in the same line; XVI. 2.

**Compound rime:** rime which extends over two fully stressed syllables; XVI. 8.

**Concatenatio:** the linking together of stanzas by using the same words at the end of one and the beginning of the next; a device common in M.E. (e.g. Minot and especially *The Pearl*). See also *Epanastrophe*.

**Congruity of feet:** the characteristic which fits one type of foot to go well with another in the same rhythmical movement, depending chiefly on similarity of shape (i.e. both must end or both must begin with the stressed syllable) as well as approximate equality of duration; VII. 3.

**Counterpoint:** the harmonious combination of concurrent but distinct melodies ('note against note'); these in verse-rhythm cannot be made quite audible, since there is only a single voice, but the counterpoint exists mentally, and two rhythms—the strict ideal metrical rhythm, and the natural cadence suggested by the actual speech-sounds used—are held concurrently in mind, the result being a peculiar compromise in the actual or imaginary enunciation; XI. 5.

**Coupe:** a French term equivalent to *caesura* ('cutting'); the regular metrical break in the middle of a line.

**Couplet:** a group of two verses, usually connected by rime; XVII. 2, XX. 1.

**Couplet rime:** XVI. 12.

**Cretic:** the Greek name for a combination of three syllables, a short in the middle with 'a long on both sides' (hence the less common name *amphimacer*); in Greek lyric verse all the syllables were probably of different lengths, and the cretic was a metron of two feet, | ̣ ̣ | ̣ |; II. 13, IX. 2.

**Cretic rime:** trisyllabic rime in which the first and third syllables are metrically stressed; see also **Compound rime**; XVI. 10.

**Cross rime** = **alternate rime** (q.v.); XVI. 12 (ii).

**Crotchet:** see **Musical Notation**.

**Dactyl:** a foot of three syllables, of which the first carries the ictus; in Greek, therefore, the first was long and the others short, and in English the first is heavy and the others usually light, although one of them sometimes has a subordinate accent; II. 13, XIV. 20, XV. 11 and *addendum*, XVI. 7.

**Dactylic rime** or **gliding rime:** trisyllabic rime in which only the first syllables respectively are accented; XIV. 20, XVI. 7, 10.

**Dactylic substitution:** the substitution for a trochee of a foot of dactylic shape, but with its time-values adjusted to the trochaic rhythm; XIV. 19; see also VII. 9.

**Dancing:** II. 1.

**Decasyllabic verse:** a verse containing ten metrically counted syllables like the French *vers décasyllabe*; according to conventional metrical theory other syllables, if admitted, are either elided or hypermetrical; XII. 4 et seq. (Often inaccurately applied to heroic verse which freely admits substitution and disregards syllabic number.)

**Descending rhythm:** see **Falling rhythm**.

**Diaeresis:** coincidence of foot-divisions with word-divisions; XI. 6.

**Diamb:** an apparent combination of two iambs.

**Diambic rime:** XVI. 10.

**Dimeter:** the Greek name for a verse of two 'measures', the measure (*μέτρον*) being often a *διποδία*, so that the verse may have four feet; sometimes loosely used for an English verse of two feet, without distinction of kind, i.e. a dipody.

**Dipody** (Gk. *διποδία*): a combination of two feet, IX. 2, note; a verse of two feet, XIV. 11.

**Dispondee:** a combination of two spondees, i.e. four long syllables (Gk.).

**Distich:** a group of two lines, implying perhaps, more than the term 'couplet' does, that the group is self-contained in rhythm and sense; XVII. 2, XX. 1.

**Distributed accent:** an apparent division of accent between two successive syllables (see **Hovering accent** and **Level stress**); VIII. 12, XII. 9.

**Disyllabic rime:** rime in which similarity of sound is displayed by two or more sets of two successive syllables; usually, but not necessarily, *feminine* (q.v.); XVI. 8, 10, XVII. 5.

**Ditrochaic rime:** XVI. 10.

**Ditrochee:** a group of four syllables alternately long and short; two trochees (Gk.); XIV. 21.

**Dixain:** group of ten lines; XXIV. 4.

**Dochmiac:** the sequence  $\cup - - \cup -$  (Gk.).

**Doggerel:** a loose irregular metre; verse defective in rhythm, and correspondingly rough and undignified in style.

**Double ending:** the particular kind of ending to a line in rising rhythm, which consists of a more or less weak hypermetrical syllable after the final arsis; XI. 7 (*b*).

**Double rime:** often the same as **feminine rime**, but sometimes implies that the second syllable receives a distinct secondary stress, despite the full metrical stress on the first; XVI. 8.

**Dramatic blank verse:** the type of verse used in drama, usually freer and more variable than that of epic, in order to suit differences of character, situation, &c.

**Dramatic caesura:** the particular kind of feminine caesura (see **Feminine**) which occurs in drama, particularly when the line is divided between two speakers, where the light syllable may be regarded as hypermetrical, being slipped in, as it were, as part of the pause: a rather more suitable term than the additional **epic caesura** (q.v.); IV. 13, X. 4.

**Duple time:** a rhythmical scheme with two time-units to a bar.

**Duration:** II. 10.

**Elegiacs:** a scheme of metre in which a full hexameter is followed by a hexameter catalectic, i.e. one having a monosyllabic foot at the caesura and at the end of the line (often erroneously called a pentameter); III. 6, XV. 7 note, 18.

**Elegiac quatrain:** an alternative name given to the **heroic quatrain** (q.v.) owing to Gray's use of this metre for his *Elegy*; XX. 3 note.

**Elision:** the running together of two syllables—strictly, ending and beginning respectively with a vowel—so that they actually or theoretically become one, whether by combination or by the suppression (elision in the narrowest sense) of one of them; V. 3-8, X. 4, XII. 10.

**Emotion:** I. 2, 5, 6.

**Emphasis:** the additional force given to the expression of a word to draw attention to its importance.

**Enclosing rime:** the arrangement by which one pair of rimes is enclosed within another pair, *abba*; XVI. 12, XX. 3 (*d*).

**End-pause:** the metrical pause which occurs at the end of a verse even when the sentence arrangement gives very little excuse for it, its metrical function being to help in marking the secondary rhythm; III. 6, IV *passim*, XI. 7 (*f*), XIX. 12.

**End-stopped:** a term applied to verses which have an unmistakable end-pause; IV. 4, XI. 7 (*b*), XIX. 12, XX. 1.

**English sonnet-form:** see **Shakespearian sonnet**, and XXII.



**Enjambement**: a French term, almost naturalized, for the running on or overflowing of the sense and rhythm of one line, couplet, or stanza into the next; IV. 5-6, XVII. 2, XX. 1.

**Enjambement, stanzaic**: XVII. 7.

**Envoi**: the stanza, usually shorter than the others, appended to poems of *ballade* or similar form, usually giving a final address; XXIV. 3, 4.

**Epanaphora**: (1) strictly a figure of speech in which several sentences begin with the same word; (2) as applied to versification, the repetition of the same word or words at the beginning of several successive lines; XVI. 14, XIX. 15.

**Epanastrophe** (or *anadiplosis*); the use of the concluding words of one sentence (in rhetoric) or stanza (in versification) as the opening words of the next; cf. **Concatenatio**.

**Epic blank verse**: the type of verse used in epic poetry, typically stricter in form and more uniformly dignified in movement than dramatic blank verse.

**Epic caesura**: a feminine caesura where a weak syllable before the pause may be regarded as hypermetrical; so called because of its prevalence in Old French heroic metre; IV. 13, X. 4 (see **Dramatic caesura**).

**Epitrite**: a combination of three long syllables and a short in any order (Gk.).

**Epode** or **After-song**: the part of a Pindaric ode sung when the chorus stood still ('the stand'); strictly all three epodes correspond in length and metrical structure; XXIII. 4.

**Equivalence**: the characteristic by virtue of which metrical feet of different composition may be substituted for each other; they must (α) be, at least approximately, equal in duration, and (β) all begin or all end with a syllable susceptible to stress; Ch. V, VI.

**Etymological accent**: = **word-accent**, the accent which makes certain syllables of individual words stand out more prominently than others; in English these are usually the syllables of greatest etymological importance; VIII. 5 (i).

**Exact rime**: an ambiguous term which may mean simply 'correct' rime, according to the accepted definition, but is also used, unnecessarily, of **identical rime** (q.v.).

**Extended rime**: rime in which the similarity of sound extends backward to the syllable or syllables before the last arsis of the verse; XVI. 9.

**Extrametrical**: see **Hypermetrical**.

**Eye rime**: an apparent rime between two words that are spelt, but not pronounced, alike, e.g. *bear, fear*; XVI. 7.

**Falling rhythm**: a not quite satisfactory name for the type of rhythm in which the cadence seems to be continually falling from a high level of stress (or possibly of pitch, or of both) to a lower, and in which the ictus is carried by the first syllable of the foot; II. 12.

**Feminine caesura**: a pause in the middle of a line after a syllable, short or light, which does not carry ictus; IV. 13.

**Feminine ending**: the ending of a line with a light syllable after the final arsis; in rising rhythm a hypercatalectic ending; X. 1, XI. 7 (b).

**Feminine rime**: disyllabic rime which involves the last metrically stressed syllable and a following light syllable; XVI. 8.

**Fifteener**: a line of fifteen syllables; originally a catalectic tetrameter.

**Five-foot verse**: XIV. 1-6, XX. 2.

**Foot**: that part of a rhythmical sequence of speech-sound which consists of an arsis or metrically stressed syllable and whatever occupies the interval between that and the previous or subsequent arsis, according to the type of rhythm; the part which is not metrically stressed (thesis) may consist partly or wholly of a silent interval; II. 4, 5, 8, 13, V. 1.

**Four-foot verse**: XIV. 7-8, XX. 1.

**Fourteener** or **Septenary**: a line of fourteen metrically counted syllables; originally a brachycatalectic tetrameter; XX. 3 (c).

**French metre**: III. 5-6, XII. 2, 4.

**French stanza-poems**: Ch. XXIV.

**Frons**: XVII. 8.

**Full rime**: rime in which the conditions as to likeness of sound quality are entirely fulfilled; correct rime; XVI. 6.

**Galliambic**: an Ionic metre (q.v.) with free substitution, used in the *Attis* of Catullus; XV. 17.

**Gliding rime**: rime involving the last metrically stressed syllable of a line and the two subsequent (often hypermetrical) light syllables; see under **Dactylic**; XVI. 8.

**Grammatical accent**: that kind of accent which distinguishes one syllable or word from another according to its grammatical importance; the term covers both syntactical and etymological accent; VIII. 5.

**Head rime** = **alliteration** (q.v.).

**Heavy foot**: a foot containing a heavy syllable in thesis as well as in arsis; more or less equivalent to a spondee; XIV. 13.

**Heavy syllable**: a syllable in which full stress is accompanied by a certain degree of length (and not impossibly, but not necessarily, of pitch), and which is therefore fully capable of bearing the metrical beat (*ictus*).

**Hebung** (Germ.): a metrically stressed syllable.

**Hemistich**: a half-line (particularly in O.E. verse), where the whole line is by metrical law or convention regularly divided into two definite parts.

**Hendecasyllabic verse**: lit. a verse of eleven syllables, as the Italian *endecasillabo*; the Greek metre so named had a definite scheme; XV. 14 note, 15.

**Heptameter**: a verse of seven 'measures'.

**Heroic couplet:** XX. 2.

**Heroic quatrain:** literally, any stanza of four heroic lines, but usually confined to one with alternate rimes, *abab*; XX. 3.

**Heroic verse:** (1) verse which is used normally for heroic or epic poetry; in Greek and Latin, the hexameter; in French, the alexandrine (or earlier, the *vers décasyllabe*); in Italian, the *verso endecasillabo*; (2) in English, verse whose normal scheme of metre is the five-foot iambic, whether rimed or unrimed, whether observing strict syllabic limits (whence often called 'decasyllabic') or admitting free substitution; III. 5, XI, XII, XIV. 1-6, XVIII. *addendum*, XIX.

**Hexameter:** a verse of six 'measures'; in classical metric, a verse of six feet, mostly dactylic, but allowing substitution of the equivalent spondee for any foot but the fifth, and requiring it (or an apparent trochee) in the sixth; IX. 2, XV. A.

**Hiatus** ('a gap'): the coming together of two fully pronounced vowels without intervening consonant in successive words or syllables.

**Homophone:** a word or syllable similar in sound to another; rime, either partial or exact.

**Horatian ode:** see **Lesbian ode**.

**Hovering accent:** a name given to cases where it seems doubtful as to which of two adjacent syllables receives stress, so that the accent apparently 'hovers' between the two; see **Distributed accent** and **Level stress**; VIII. 12, XII. 9.

**Huitain:** a group of eight lines.

**Hypercatalectic:** having one or more syllables beyond those necessary for completing the metrical structure of the line; Ch. X, XI. 7 (*b*).

**Hypermetrical:** falling outside the metrical scheme, e.g. a feminine ending or true anacrusis; Ch. X, XI. 7 (*b*).

**Iamb:** a metrical foot of two syllables, the second of which receives the beat or ictus, and is therefore longer (in classical verse) or heavier (in English) than the first; II. 13.

**Iambic rime:** rime involving the final stressed syllable and also the preceding unstressed syllable; XVI. 10.

**Ictus:** the regularly recurrent 'beat' of the verse; the phenomenon which marks out the rhythm, and therefore falls at the end of every foot in rising rhythm or at the beginning in falling rhythm, these places normally being filled by syllables naturally strong enough to carry the ictus, i.e. long or heavy; II. 4, 10, 11, and *addendum* ii, VIII *passim*, IX. 1. 2, 7, XI. 1.

**Ideal beat:** VIII. 6-7; see also **Subjective rhythm**.

**Identical rime:** rime in which not only the vowels of the last stressed syllables and all following sounds, but also the preceding consonants, are similar, e.g. *pear*, *impair*; *accord*, *record*; XVI. 6. See also **Rich rime**.

**Imperfect rime:** a rime which does not comply with the technical

'conditions of a 'good' rime, being inexact in the correspondence of sounds as to quality or accent; XVI. 6-7.

*In Memoriam Stanza*: XX. 3 (d).

**Indeterminate rhythm**: XIV. 23.

**Initial catalexis or truncation**: absence of a syllable or two at the beginning of a line (in rising rhythm); VI. 1, 5.

**Interlaced alliteration**: XVI. 2.

**Interlaced rime**: XVI. 12, 13. (See **Alternate rime**.)

**Intermittent compound rime**: XVI. 8.

**Intermittent rime**: a rime-scheme in which, say, the even lines rime, while the odd lines are unrimed; XVI. 12, XX. 3 (c).

**Internal alliteration**: XVI. 4.

**Internal pause**: Ch. IV.

**Internal rime**: the riming of a word within the line with another within the same or the next line, or at the end of the same line; XVI. 13.

**Inverted stress**: Ch. VII. *addendum* i.

**Ionic**: in classical prosody a foot of two longs followed by two shorts (*ionicus a maiore*); XV. 17.

**Isochronous interval**: the equal period of time from one metrical beat to the next; Ch. II.

**Isometrical**: composed of lines of equal length, and probably, therefore, similar in metrical structure.

**Italian sonnet**: the particular form of sonnet established in Italy, principally by Dante and Petrarch, in which there is a *volta*, or turn, both in the thought-structure and the metrical scheme at the end of the eighth line—the octave and sestet having each its own rime-scheme and being separated by a pause. The octave has enclosed rime on two sounds; the sestet has two or three rimes, but avoids a final couplet; XXII. 3-8.

**Legato**: smoothly continuous in flow, concealing and neutralizing the slight breaks between words and feet; II. 12.

**Length**: a characteristic which depends primarily on the duration or extension in time of a syllable; this in its turn depends primarily on the phonetic nature both of vowels and of consonants and also of their collocation. If a syllable contains certain resonant elements that are capable of prolongation, stress will probably lengthen it upon necessity. The natural length of syllables is not absolutely fixed, but for prosodic purposes syllables have sometimes been conventionally divided into long and short, with a certain remainder recognized as common or doubtful (*anceps*), and a fixed ratio, e.g. 2 : 1, has been assumed; it is in this case particularly that the term 'quantity' is used for 'length'. Quantity is also determined by relative position in a sentence; a short syllable ending in a consonant may become long 'by position' before a syllable beginning with a consonant; Ch. IX.

**Leonine**: a word given to certain lines in mediaeval Latin verse, in which the word before the caesura rimes with that at the end of the

line; XVI. 13. [In strict French prosody, this is *vers léonin*, but *rime léonine* is rime which is 'extended' backwards from the accented syllable.]

**Lesbian ode**: an ode consisting of a regular series of short, e.g. four-lined, stanzas of similar metrical structure, like those attributed to Alcaeus and Sappho, poets of Lesbos, and imitated in Latin by Horace; XXIII. 2.

**Level stress**: a term which may be used for cases where contiguous syllables have an apparently equal or 'hovering' accent which causes some doubt as to the division into feet; VIII. 12.

**Light accents**: VIII. 4, 6-11, XI. 7 (c), (d), XIV. 5-6.

**Light ending**: a light monosyllable at the end of a line, which should receive the final ictus according to the metrical scheme, but is so relatively unimportant that the voice does not naturally dwell on it, e.g. pronoun or auxiliary verb (unemphatic and non-predicative); a less extreme form of **weak ending** (q.v.); VIII. 11 note.

**Line or verse**: the unit of secondary rhythm in poetry, consisting of a group or short series of the units of primary rhythm (usually feet, sometimes syllables, possibly stress-groups); III. 3, XIV. 4, XVI. 1.

**Logaedic**: a term applied by classical grammarians to lyric metres which apparently had a trochaic base, but contained also feet of dactylic and spondaic form, as in Alcaics and Sapphics. (From *λόγος*, prose speech, + *δοιδή*, song, because apparently partaking of the character of both, although only used in melic poetry.)

**Logical accent**: the kind of accent or stress which marks out in a sentence the words that are most important for the expression of the thought; VIII. 5 (ii).

**Long**: applicable to (1) vowels (not merely or precisely dependent on duration), (2) consonants, (3) syllables (see **Length**); VIII. 2 note, IX.

**Long measure**: a hymn stanza of four lines each of four feet (iambic), or of eight syllables.

**Lyric caesura**: a particular kind of feminine caesura (q.v.) which occurred occasionally in early French lyric lines, where the break was made after the fourth syllable, but this was not accented although it counted in the metrical scheme; IV. 13 note, X. 4 note.

**Lyric metres, classical**: XV. B.

**Lyric verse**: Ch. XIII.

**Major rhythm**: XIV. 21, XV. 17.

**Masculine caesura**: internal pause after a syllable (long or heavy) which carries the ictus; IV. 13.

**Masculine ending**: the ending of a line on a metrically stressed syllable.

**Masculine rime**: rime at the end of lines (or sections) with masculine ending; XVI. 8.

**Measure**: (1) a unitary group of syllables in a rhythmical series; the syllable on which a beat falls, together with whatever fills the

interval between that beat and the one following or preceding, i.e. a 'bar' or 'foot', but in Gk. a μέτρον often contained two feet, e.g. when trochaic (or iambic); (2) = 'line'; a unitary section of secondary rhythm; (3) = 'metre'; a determinate form of rhythm.

**Medial pause**: IV. 7-13.

**Medial rime**: see **Internal rime**, **Leonine**, and **XVI. 13**.

**Melic verse**: verse definitely intended for song; a rather narrower term than 'lyric', which might include elegy; **XIII. 2**.

**Mental beat or rhythm**: II. 6, VI. 9-10, VIII. 6-8.

**Metabolic**: = **anisometrical** (q.v.). Perhaps would be better confined to stanzas where there is a change of rhythmical movement, real or apparent, not merely one of line-length; e.g. in Shelley's *To a Skylark*, Swinburne's *Riever's Neck-Verse* (see **XIV. 22**).

**Metre**: (1) verse as distinguished from prose; a deliberate and systematic arrangement of language in more or less definite rhythmical forms, immediately perceptible as such by the ear or auditory imagination;

(2) the specific scheme according to which rhythm manifests itself in verse, determined by the kind of feet normally used, or the particular kind of syllabic arrangement most commonly found (as used in such a sentence as 'trochaic metre is not suitable for the epic'); **XI. 8**;

(3) a generic name for lines of determinate lengths in a particular kind of metre (according to (2) above); determined by the number as well as kind of feet used (as in 'four-foot iambic metre'; cf. Gk. terms, 'dimeter', &c.); **III. 5**, **XIV.**

**Metres, names of**: **III. 5**.

**Metrical pause**: a pause (suspensory) that (theoretically at least) marks off one verse or section from another, or has its position determined by the law of the metre; **IV. 2**.

**Metrical stress**: the stress which marks the beats of verse rhythm; **II. 10**, **VIII. 5** (iii).

**Metron** (Gk. μέτρον): a metrical unit in Greek prosody, consisting of one foot or two (e.g. one dactyl, but two trochees) according to the type of rhythm.

**Minor rhythm**: **XIV. 21**, **XV. 17**.

**Molossus**: a combination of three long syllables (Gk.).

**Monometer**: a line of one 'metron' (q.v.).

**Monopody**: a one-foot verse; **XIV. 11**.

**Monopressure**: a group of syllables produced by one breath-impulse; **XI. 7** (g).

**Monostichic**: an adjective applicable to verse which shows no grouping of lines, and in which usually the integrity of the line is clearly marked.

**Monosyllabic foot**: **VI. passim**, **XI. 7** (a), **XV. 19**.

**Monosyllabic rime**: **XVI. 8**, **10**.

**Mora**: a primary unit of time, in classical prosody equal to the time of one short syllable.

**Music:** I. 5-6, II. 4, Ch. XIII.

**Musical Notation:** a set of names and signs representing the fixed ratios of duration between musical sounds or notes; the *Semibreve* is regarded as the unit or whole note, written  $\circ$ ; subdivisions of this unit are the

*Minim* =  $\frac{1}{2}$  note

*Crotchet* =  $\frac{1}{4}$  note

*Quaver* =  $\frac{1}{8}$  note

*Semiquaver* =  $\frac{1}{16}$  note

*Demisemiquaver* =  $\frac{1}{32}$  note



In early music the *Minim*, as its name indicates, was the shortest note, and the *Breve* was only a 'half-long' note. A dot written after a note increases its time-value by half:

$$\text{Minim} = \text{Minim} \cdot, \text{Crotchet} = \text{Crotchet} \cdot.$$

Corresponding periods of silence which occupy part of the fixed time of a bar are called **Rests**, and their duration is measured in the same way as that of notes: Minim rest  $\equiv$ , Crotchet rest  $\text{r}$ , Quaver rest  $\text{r}$ , Semiquaver rest  $\text{r}$ , &c. A dot after a rest sign increases its time-value by half.

The accented notes which occur at regular intervals are regarded as beginning a **bar**, the time-value of which is constant and exactly the sum of the notes and rests included in it. The **Time-Signature** indicates the length of the bar in a particular melody:  $\frac{2}{4}$  means two quarter-notes, i.e. crotchets, in a bar,  $\frac{3}{4}$  three crotchets, and so on. In elaborate music the time-signature is sometimes changed for particular bars only, by means of superscribed figures. A similar effect is not unknown in poetry (v. XIII. 8).

**Nomenclature:** II. 13, III. 5.

**Notation:** II. 11, XIV. 3.

**Note:** a musical sound of determinate length and pitch.

**Numbers:** XII. 3.

**Obsolete rimes:** XVI. 7.

**Octave:** in metric, a group of eight lines.

**Octometer:** verses of eight 'measures', e.g. as in Longfellow's *Golden Legend*, or Tennyson's *Vastness*, but strictly not applicable to the eight-foot trochaic lines of *Locksley Hall* (see **Metron**); XIV. 20.

**Octosyllabic:** XX. 1.

**Ode:** XVIII. 4, 7, XXIII.

**Old English:** see **Anglo-Saxon**.

**Onomatopoeia:** the representation or suggestion of meaning by sound; this may be done partly by means of the quality of sounds, as in the well-known lines, 'Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves...' (*Passing of Arthur*), and partly by means of the rhythm, as when the

effect of slowness or effort is produced by spondaic substitution, or the galloping effect by an unusual proportion of dactyls or anapaests, as in 'Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit unguli campum', or 'With sound of many a heavily galloping hoof'. Strictly this book is concerned only with the latter method, but often the two are combined, as in the Virgilian example and in Pope's 'When Ajax strives some rock's huge weight to throw . . .'.

**Ottava rima**: an Italian eight-lined stanza (rimed *abababcc*) of hendecasyllabic lines used by chivalric romance writers and admirably adapted to the mock-heroic effects developed in that form; XXI. 2-3.

**Overflow**: the running-on, in sense and rhythm, of one line into the next; IV. 6, XI. 7 (*f*), XVI. 1, XVII. 2, 4, 7, XIX. 6, 11, 15.

**Paeon**: a combination of one long and three short syllables; called first, second, &c., according to the position of the long syllable; XIV. 15, 21.

**Paeonic rime**: XVI. 10.

**Pantoum**: XXIV. *addendum*.

**Pause**: Ch. IV, XI. 7 (*b*), XIX. 8.

**Pedes**: XVII. 8, XX. 1.

**Pentameter**: a verse of five 'measures' (which were often dipodies); in English commonly used of a verse of 'five feet' (pentapody); III. 6, XV. 18. (See under **Metron**.)

**Periodicity**: II *passim*, VIII. 1-2, 6.

**Petrarchan sonnet**: see **Italian**.

**Phonetic syzygy**: XVI. 3.

**Pindarics**: XXIII. 4-7.

**Pitch**: height, sharpness, or shrillness of tone, depending on frequency of vibrations; XIII. 5 and *addendum*.

**Pitch accent**: III. 6, VIII. 10, XII. 8, XV. *addendum*. (See **Tonic accent**.)

**Position**: see under **Length**.

**Poulter's measure**: alternate six-foot and seven-foot iambic lines (alexandrines and septenaries) with couplet rime; XX. 3 (*c*). Of this 'long verse of twelve and fourtene syllables', Gascoigne says: 'I knowe not certainly howe to name it, unless I should say that it doth consist of Poulters measure, which giveth xii for one dozen and xiiii for another'.

**Primary rhythm**: II. 1-12, III. 2, 5, V. 1-2, VI. 2, 4-6, VIII. 6-8, XI. 1.

**Proceleusmatic**: a combination of four short syllables (Gk.).

**Prose**: Ch. III.

**Prosody**: Gk. *προσῳδία*, a song (to music), the tone or accent of a syllable; the study of the properties of syllables, accentual, quantitative, &c., which fit them for a place in verse or metrical composition. The term is sometimes used to connote the study of metre in general, or more widely still, of versification (which deals with subjects like 'tone-colour' as well as metre), but prosody is not primarily concerned with lines as a whole, or with larger units.

**Pyrrhic**: a foot of two syllables, both of which are short (in Greek) or light (in English). Strictly, therefore, it is irregular in any of the



normal schemes of poetic rhythm; according to the ideal scheme of the rhythm, one of the two syllables (the first or second according as the rhythm is falling or rising) should receive an ictus; this beat, however, is merely supplied in imagination, i.e. subjectively, or is extremely light if objective; II. 13, VII. 8, VIII. 11.

**Quadrisyllabic rime**: XVI. 10.

**Quadrisyllabic substitution**: substitution of four-syllabled feet for feet of two or three syllables; V. 9, XIV. 15.

**Quantity**: the 'length' of a syllable, either naturally, or as fixed by prosodic convention (especially the latter) (see **Length**); II. 10, V. 7, IX *passim*, XV. 3-4, 6.

**Quantity and accent**: IX. 7 and *addendum*.

**Quatorzain**: strictly any stanza of fourteen lines, and so covering all sonnets, but specially applied to the particular sonnet structure known as **Shakespearian** (q.v.); XXII. 11-12.

**Quatrain**: a stanza or group of four lines; XX. 3, XXII. 6, 11.

**Quaver**: see **Musical Notation**.

**Quinesyllabic rime**: XVI. 10.

**Quintet**: a group of five lines.

**Recession of accent**: the 'going-back' of word-accent from its natural place at the end of a word to a preceding syllable; VIII. 15-16.

**Redundant syllable**: lit. any extra syllable, but particularly one at the end of a line (or half-line), i.e. a hypermetrical syllable (**feminine ending** or **feminine caesura**, q.v.); Ch. X.

**Refrain**: a line (or half-line or pair of lines) recurring regularly at a definite place in a stanza (usually the end); XVI. 15, XXIV. 1.

**Repos** or **reprise d'haleine** ('retaking of breath'): French terms for the caesura or regular break in the middle of the line, which gave a short time to rest and take breath again before continuing the line; III. 3, IV. 8.

**Resolution**: separation or breaking up into the component elements which were latent in the whole; the substitution of an equivalent foot.

**Resolved arsis** (or **stress**): when in O.E. verse the full metrical stress falls not, as normally, on a long syllable, but on the first of two closely connected short syllables (separated only by a single consonant), the arsis (or stress) is said to be resolved.

**Rest**: a period of silence which occupies a definite portion of the time of a bar of music and is counted in that bar; II. 4, V. 6. (See **Musical Notation**.)

**Rhetoric as guide to scansion**: VII. 5-6.

**Rhetorical accent**: the kind of accent which gives prominence to a word which may not normally be of great syntactical or logical importance, but has a special emphasis intended to bring out a contrast, or some unusual significance; VIII. 5 (ii).

**Rhyme**: an old spelling of *rime*, in which the *h* is intrusive, probably owing to confusion with *rhythm*.

**Rhythm**: I. 6, II *passim*, XIII. 4. It is necessary to distinguish

the different usages of this word—loose and exact; e.g. (1) simply 'a flowing movement' (Gk. *ῥυθμός*); (2) a flowing movement with a certain principle of temporal regularity in it; (3) a particular concrete kind of regular movement; thus we can speak of two lines which have the same rhythmical scheme having at the same time a different rhythm or movement. All well-written prose which 'marches' may have rhythm in the first sense; but rhythm in the second sense is one of the chief differentiae between verse and prose. (See **Cadence**.)

**Riding rime**: the heroic couplet.

**Rime**: III. 6, XVI. 1, 6.

**Rime, alleged poverty of in English**: XXI. 3.

**Rime in lyric**: XIII. 11.

**Rime in vers libres**: XVIII. 5, 10.

**Rime-breaking**: the ending of a sentence between the two rimes of a couplet rather than at the end of the second line; XVII. 2, XX. 1 (a).

**Rime brisée**: interlaced medial and final rime; XVI. 13 (ii).

**Rime couée or tail rime**: a riming arrangement by which two couplets or triplets are each followed by a shorter (or longer) line with a different rime-sound, the two 'tails' riming together; XVI. 12, XX. 5 (v), (vii), XXI. 2 (b) (e).

**Rime-royal**: see **Chaucerian stanza**; XXI. 1.

**Rimeless verse**: XVII. 6, XVIII. XIX.

**Rising rhythm**: a rhythmic movement in which the stress seems constantly to be rising from a low level to a high one, and then dropping sharply to rise again (by one or two steps), so that it is best represented by feet in which the ictus falls at the end; II. 12, XIV. 1-2.

**Rondeau, rondel, roundel**: XXIV. 5-7.

**Rubā'iyāt or Tetrastichs**: groups of four, five-foot lines, the first, second, and fourth regularly (and the third optionally) riming together, in imitation of the Persian metre used by Omar Khayyam. A *rubā'i* contained strictly four half-lines or two *bait*s, the *bait* or pair of hemistichs being regarded as the unit (hence an alternative name, *dubaiti*); XX. 3 (e).

**Sapphic**: a Greek lyrical stanza named after the Lesbian poetess Sappho (though probably not invented by her), and imitated by Horace; IX. 2, XV. 14.

**Scansion**: VII. 4-5.

**Secondary accent**: VIII. 4, 9.

**Secondary rhythm**: III. 3, 6, IV. 4-5, XII. 4, XVI. 1, XVIII. 1, XIX. 2, 14.

**Sectional rime**: XVI. 13.

**Semibreve, semiquaver**: see **Musical Notation**.

**Senarius**: a six-foot line.

**Senkung**: a syllable or part of a foot without metrical stress (German).

**Sense-pause**: a pause which marks off divisions in the verbal expression of thought; IV. 1, 7.

**Sentence-stress**: the stress which brings out into relief the words which are most significant in the structure of the sentence, usually dependent on logical and syntactical importance, but often modified by special rhetorical emphasis; VIII. 5 (ii).

**Septenary**: a verse of seven feet, originally a brachycatalectic tetrameter; III. 5, XIV. 10, XX. 3 (c).

**Septet**: a group of seven lines.

**Sestet**: a group of six lines; XXII. 6.

**Sestina**: XXIV. 3.

**Seven-foot verse**: XIV. 10.

**Shakespearian sonnet**: a sonnet with the looser structure evolved by Surrey and adopted by Shakespeare, viz. three heroic quatrains (each with two different rimes on the alternating scheme) with a final couplet; XXII. 10-11.

**Short**: see **Length and Long**.

**Short measure**: a quatrain with alternate or intermittent rime, the third line having four feet (iambic) and the others three feet; produced from the break-up of **Poulter's measure**: XX. 3 (c).

**Six-foot verse**: III. 5, V. 9, XI. 7 (b), XIV. 4, 9, 12, 18, XX. 1 (b), (c), XXI. 3.

**Sixain**: a group of six lines.

**Slurring**: the pronunciation of successive sounds in such a way that they are neither distinctly separated nor actually blended; V. 3, 8.

✓ **Smoothness in verse**: XI. 7 (e).

**Song and Song-verse**: II. 1, XIII.

**Sonnet**: a poem of fourteen lines (usually heroic) devoted to the dignified and thoughtful expression of one emotion, sentiment, or idea, imaginatively conceived; its form generally follows a conventional scheme; see **Italian sonnet**, **Shakespearian sonnet**, and XVII. 3-4 and Ch. XXII.

**Speech-verse**: XIII. 13, XIV. 1-2, 4.

✓ **Speed**: XI. 7 (d).

**Spelling rime** = **eye rime**.

**Spenserian sonnet**: XXII. 12.

**Spenserian stanza**: a stanza of eight heroic lines and a final alexandrine, with an interlinked rime-scheme, *a b a b b c b c, c, c*; XXI. 3.

**Spondee**: a foot of two syllables which are in ordinary speech equally long (in Greek) or heavy (in English); the spondee may receive ictus on its first or second syllable according as it occurs in falling or rising rhythm; II. 13, VII. 8, VIII. 11, XV. 8-9, 11.

**Staccato**: disconnected or abrupt, owing to successive notes being detached one from another and separated by slight pauses; in verse, jerkiness of utterance; II. 12.

**Stanza or strophe**: a constant group of lines; the unit of tertiary rhythm; XVI. 1, XVII, XIX. 3.

**Stave:** stanza.

**Stichic:** composed in lines; often equivalent to **monostichic** (q. v.).

**Stress:** force or intensity of utterance, actual or imaginary; II. 10, VIII *passim*; physically dependent on the amplitude (breadth) of vibrations, produced physiologically by greater or less pressure of breath, i.e. by a relatively stronger effort.

**Stress, degrees of:** VIII. 4.

**Stress, functions of:** VIII. 5.

**Strophe:** (i) = stanza (q. v.); XVII.

(ii) or turn: the first section or stanza of a Greek choral ode, which was sung by the chorus while it moved across the stage round the altar from right to left (clockwise); XVIII. 4.

**Subjective accent:** the accent given in imagination in a place where it ought to fall according to the ideal rhythmic scheme, but where phonetic conditions do not favour its being given actually and objectively; II. 6, VIII. 6-7; also VIII. 5 (ii) (b).

**Subjective rhythm:** see references under **Subjective accent**.

**Substitution:** V, VI, VII, XI. 7.

**Suppression of arsis:** substitution of a silent interval for that part of the foot which should receive the ictus according to the ideal rhythmic scheme; the line is so spaced out that the beat falls subjectively during a pause; VI. 9.

**Suppression of thesis:** substitution of a silent interval (**compensatory pause**, q. v.) for the part of the foot that would not have been metrically stressed; Ch. VI. (See **Monosyllabic substitution**)

**Suppression of whole foot:** VI. 10.

**Suspensory pause:** a pause which interrupts the rhythm, but does not form part of it; it suspends the counting of time for an indefinite period; distinct from a 'compensatory' pause just as in music a pause is distinct from a rest; Ch. IV.


**Syllabic verse:** verse which for its structure depends in some recognized degree on the counting of syllables; XII, XIV. 6.

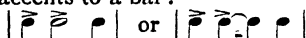
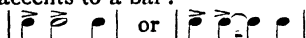
**Syllable:** the smallest separately articulated element which can be immediately distinguished in normal intelligible speech, the division being perceptible by virtue of a pause, as between two words or parts of a compound word, a difference in kind, as between vowel and consonant, or of quality, as between open and close sounds, or of degree, as between stressed and unstressed sounds; it consists of a vowel (or diphthong), alone or with one or more accompanying consonants, separated from the adjacent vowels by a consonant, or a deliberate hiatus, or a marked difference in stress. The syllabic boundaries are at the points of lowest sonority.

**Synaeresis:** contraction of two syllables or vowels into one, e.g. *dévil* to *de'il*; V. 7.

**Syncopation:** in music, the process by which one and the same note is commenced in the latter part (i.e. unaccented) of one bar, but is carried on into the following bar, i.e. over the place of the accentual

beat; or in other words, the accented note is commenced before the accent is due to fall, so that the accent itself comes before its time:

 (the latter being an older, but illuminating notation). Syncopation may occur wholly within a bar where there are two accents to a bar:

 or 

Something similar to this must occur with some frequency in verse.

**Syncope**: contraction of a word on account of a syllable or sound being omitted from the middle of it; V. 8.

**Synzesis**: the combination into one syllable of two vowels that do not form a recognized diphthong; this may occur by the coalescence of two words like *to atone* > *tuatone*.

**Syntactical accent**: the accent which brings out into relief the words most important in the structure of a sentence as a sentence; VIII. 5 (ii).

**Syzygy**: lit. 'joining together'; **Phonetic syzygy** means the bringing into close proximity of sounds that are phonetically related; XVI. 3.

**Tail rime**: see **Rime couée**.

**Tailed sonnet**: a sonnet with an extension, usually of four lines.

**Tempo**: a musical term for relative pace or rate of movement, which may also be used of verse. Speed may be accelerated, for instance, by increasing the number of sounds within the verse; XI. 7 (d).

**Tercet**: a group of three lines; XX. 2, XXII. 6.

**Tertiary rhythm**: XVI. 1, XVII. 1, XVIII. 1, XIX. 2.

**Terza rima**: an Italian continuous interlinked rime-scheme in which the second line of each tercet rimes with the first and third of the next tercet; XX. 2.

**Tetrameter**: a line of four 'measures', in English often loosely used of a line of four feet, but in classical metric the *metron* (q. v.) was often a double foot.

**Tetrapody**: a line of four feet.

**Tetrastich**: a stanza of four lines; see **Rubā'iyāt**.

**Thesis**: the part of the foot that received no metrical stress; II. 9 and *addendum*.

**Three-foot verse**: XIV. 11.

**Tone-colour**: quality or kind of sound, depending on the vocal organs called into play; II. 10.

**Tonic accent or tonos** (τόνος): the height or degree of sharpness or shrillness by which one sound may be distinguished from another, dependent physically on frequency of vibrations; II. 10, IX. 2, XV. *addend.*

**Tornada**: = **envoi** for most purposes; XXIV. 3.

**Traditional rime**: rime once good, but now imperfect on account of changes in pronunciation; e.g. *obey*, *tea*; XVI. 7.

**Triad or Trine**: a group of three stanzas—not all of the same structure, but having a prescribed form or mutual relationship—

regarded as forming a higher structural unit (i.e. of quaternary rhythm), as in the Pindaric ode; XXIII. 5.

**Tribrach**: a foot of three syllables, in Greek all short, in English all light; according to the rhythmic scheme one should receive the ictus, the first in falling, the third in rising rhythm, but this is extremely light or merely supplied ideally; II. 13.

**Trimeter**: a line of three 'measures'; cf. **Metron**, **Tetrameter**.

**Triolet**: XXIV. 8.

**Triple rime**: XVI. 10.

**Triplet** = **tercet** (q.v.); XX. 1 (b).

**Tripody**: a line of three feet.

**Trisyllabic rhythm**: XIV. 12-15, 20, 24.

**Trisyllabic rime**: XVI. 10.

**Trisyllabic substitution**: V, XI. 7 (a), XIV. 6. (See **Anapaestic** and **Dactylic substitution**.)

**Trochee**: a foot of two syllables, the first carrying the ictus and therefore long (in Greek) or heavy (in English), the second short or light; II. 13, XIV. 16-19.

**Trochaic rime**: XVI. 10.

**Trochaic substitution**: VII. 2.

**Truncation**: 'cutting short'; XIV. 19.

**Tumbling rime** = **Gliding rime** (q.v.).

**Tumbling verse**: a descriptive term for the rough trisyllabic rhythms of the early Tudor age.

**Two-foot verse**: XIV. 11.

**Unity in variety**: XI. 2-5.

**Unrimed verse**: see **Rimeless**.

**Vers Libres**: verse in which lines of irregular lengths are used and rime (if at all) at irregular positions, without any conformity to symmetrical pattern; Ch. XVIII.

**Verse**: (1) literary composition that is distinguished from prose by having systematic rhythm—primary or secondary, or (usually) both; Ch. III; (2) a verse = a 'line', a definite length of primarily rhythmical language, i.e. a unit of secondary rhythm; consisting of a short series of feet, or number of syllables; III. 3, XVI. 1; (3) a verse = a stanza; a definite group of lines, i.e. a unit of tertiary rhythm; an unnecessary use, despite its origin in Dante.

**Verse paragraph**: a series of lines, possibly beginning or ending, or both, with a part of a line; the length of the series being determined not by any external law, but by the exigencies of the idea or feeling to be expressed; IV. 5, XIX.

**Versicle**: a short line, particularly the 'half-line' of Old English poetry.

**Verso piano**: the normal line of Italian verse, which had a feminine ending, i.e. the final accent on the penultimate syllable.

**Verso sdrucchiolo** had a gliding ending, i.e. the final accent on the antepenultimate.

**Verso tronco** had a masculine ending, i.e. on an accented syllable.

**Villanelle**: XXIV. 2.

**Vocalization in song**: XIII. 10.

**Volta**: XXII. 5.

**Vowel-rime = assonance** (q. v.).

**Weak ending**: the ending of an heroic line with a monosyllable which should receive the ictus, but is so unimportant (e.g. a conjunction or preposition) that the voice cannot rest on it; VIII. 11 note.

**Weight**: the property which fits a syllable in English speech-verse (and proportionately in lyric verse) to carry the metrical ictus; this is determined chiefly by speech-stress, and probably in part by natural quantity; VIII. 2, XI. 1, 7 (c), XIII. 13.

**Wheel**: an appendage of a few riming lines, often of different length or metre, at the end of a long stanza; see **Bob**.

**Word-accent**: the accent which makes certain syllables of individual words stand out more prominently than others (see **Etymological**); VIII. 5 (i).

**Wrenching of accent**: violent removal of the accent, for metrical convenience, from its natural place to another syllable; VIII. 24-7, XVI. 7.

## INDEX OF NAMES

- Abbott, E. A., VI. 9, 11.  
 Arnold, M., XV. 3-4, 10, *addend.*, XVIII. 10, XXI. 4.  
 Barham, R. II., XVI. 8, 11.  
 Bolton, T. L., II. 6, IX. *addend.* (i).  
 ridges, R., II. 12 note, V. 3-6, VII. *addend.*, VIII. 15, IX. 4, *addend.* (i).  
 Bright, J. W., VIII. 9-10, 18, XII. 8.  
 Browning, E. B., XVI. 7.  
 Browning, R., IV. 10, XIV. 13.  
 Burns, XIII. 6-7.  
 Byron, X. 3, XVI. 8, 11, XXI. 2.  
 Casshe, V. 9, XII. 5.  
 Chalmers, XV. 5, 10, 11, *addend.*  
 Champion, XIII. 6, XV. 2, 5 note.  
 Chaucer, V. 8, XX. 1 (b), XXI. 1.  
 Clough, VI. 7, VII. 6, XV. 10.  
 Coleridge, I. 6 note, V. 5, XII. 11, XVIII. 2.  
 Collins, XXIII. 7.  
 Congreve, XXIII. 6.  
 Cowley, I. 5.  
 Cowley, XXIII. 6, 8, and *addend.*  
 Daniel, XV. 2.  
 Deane, A., XVI. 8, XXIV. 1 *et passim.*  
 Drummond, XXII. 11.  
 Elton, A. J., II. *addend.* 1, VIII. 4.  
 FitzGerald, XX. 3 (e).  
 Fletcher, J., X. 1.  
 Gascoigne, IV. 8, XI. 4, XII. 4.  
 Gilbert, W. S., V. 9, XIV. 21.  
 Gifford, XII. 6, 7.  
 Gray, XXII. 9.  
 Guiney, Edmund, XIII. 5.  
 Helmholtz, XIII. 4 and *addend.*  
 Henley, XIV. 23, XVIII. 10, XXIV. *passim.*  
 Hood, X. 2, XVI. 7, 8.  
 Hunt, Leigh, XI. 5, 7 (e).  
 Johnson, IV. 5, 10-12, 14, VII. 1 note, XI. 2, 7 (e), XII. 5, 7, XIX. 6.  
 Keats, IV. 5, XVI. 7, 8, XXI. 5, XXII. 4, 11.  
 Kingsley, XV. 9.  
 Lanier, VI. *addend.*, VIII. 5.  
 Longfellow, XV. 9.  
 Marlowe, XIX. 7-8, 10 note, 12.  
 Mayor, J. B., II. 11, VII. 2 note, 3, 4-6, 8-9.  
 Milton, IV. 5, 11-12, V. 3-6, VIII. 15, XII. 6, XVI. 5, XVIII. 3, XIX. 8, XXII. 9.  
 Moore, XIII. 9, 10, XVI. 8.  
 Munro, H. A. J., IX. 5, 7, XV. *addend.*  
 Omond, T. S., VI. *addend.*, VIII. 6, XII. 5.  
 Ovid, III. 6.  
 Patmore, VI. 3 and *addend.*, VII. 5 note, VIII. 7.  
 Poe, V. 7, 9, VII. 4, IX. 7 and *addend.*, X. 3.  
 Pope, IV. 9, XX. 1 (b).  
 Puttenham, IV. 8, X. 1, XI. 7 (b), XII. 3, XV. 2.  
 Rossetti, D. G., XVI. 7, 15, XXII. 6, 8.  
 Ruskin, II. 6, VIII. 8.



- Saintsbury, II. 12, IV. 6, V. 6, VI. 3  
note, 8 note, and *addend.*, VII. 2,  
VIII. 2 note.
- Scott, V. 2, XIV. 8, XXI. 3.
- Scripture, E. W., II. 12, VIII. 3, 10,  
IX. *addend.* (i).
- Shakespeare, IV. 9 note, V. 9, VIII.  
16, XIX. 9, 13-14, XXII. 10-11.
- Shelley, XI. 11-12, XIII. 12, XVI. 7,  
8, XVII. 7, XVIII. 10, XIX. 10-  
11, XX. 4 (iv), XXI. 3, 5, 6.
- Sidney, I. 6, XII. 3, XV. 14, XXII.  
7, 9, 11.
- Southey, V. 7 note, XV. 3, 8, 13,  
XVIII. 7 and *addend.*
- Spedding, XV. 4 and *addend.*
- Spenser, E., XXI. 3, XXII. 12, XXIV.  
3.
- Steele, J., VI. *addend.*
- Stevenson, R. L., IV. 14.
- Stone, W. J., VIII. 18, IX. *addend.*  
(b), XV. 3, 4, 7 and *addend.*
- Surrey, XXII. 10.
- Sweet, H., VI. 8 note, VIII. 5, IX  
4-5.
- Swinburne, II. 12, V. 9, VI. 12  
XIII. 11, XIV. 12, XV. 12, 14  
15, 17, XVI. 8, XVIII. 8, XXI.  
8, XXIV. 7.
- Symonds, J. A., VII. 5, 6, XI. 3-  
XIII. 12, XIX. 5, 7, XX. 5-7.
- Symons, A., III. 1, XIII. 3.
- Ten Brink, B., V. 8, VIII. 12, X. 4
- Tennyson, VIII. 18, XI. 7, XV. 1.  
17, XVI. 5, 15, XIX. 3, 15, XX  
3 (d).
- Thomson, XIX. 6.
- Verrier, P., II. 3 note, *addend.* (ii)
- Waller, XVII. 2.
- Webbe, XII. 3.
- Woodrow, H., VIII. 10, XII. 8.
- Wordsworth, I. 6, XI. 12, XII  
XVIII. 4, 10, XIX. 5, XXII.
- Yeats, W. B., V. 9.





